

IN THESE TIMES

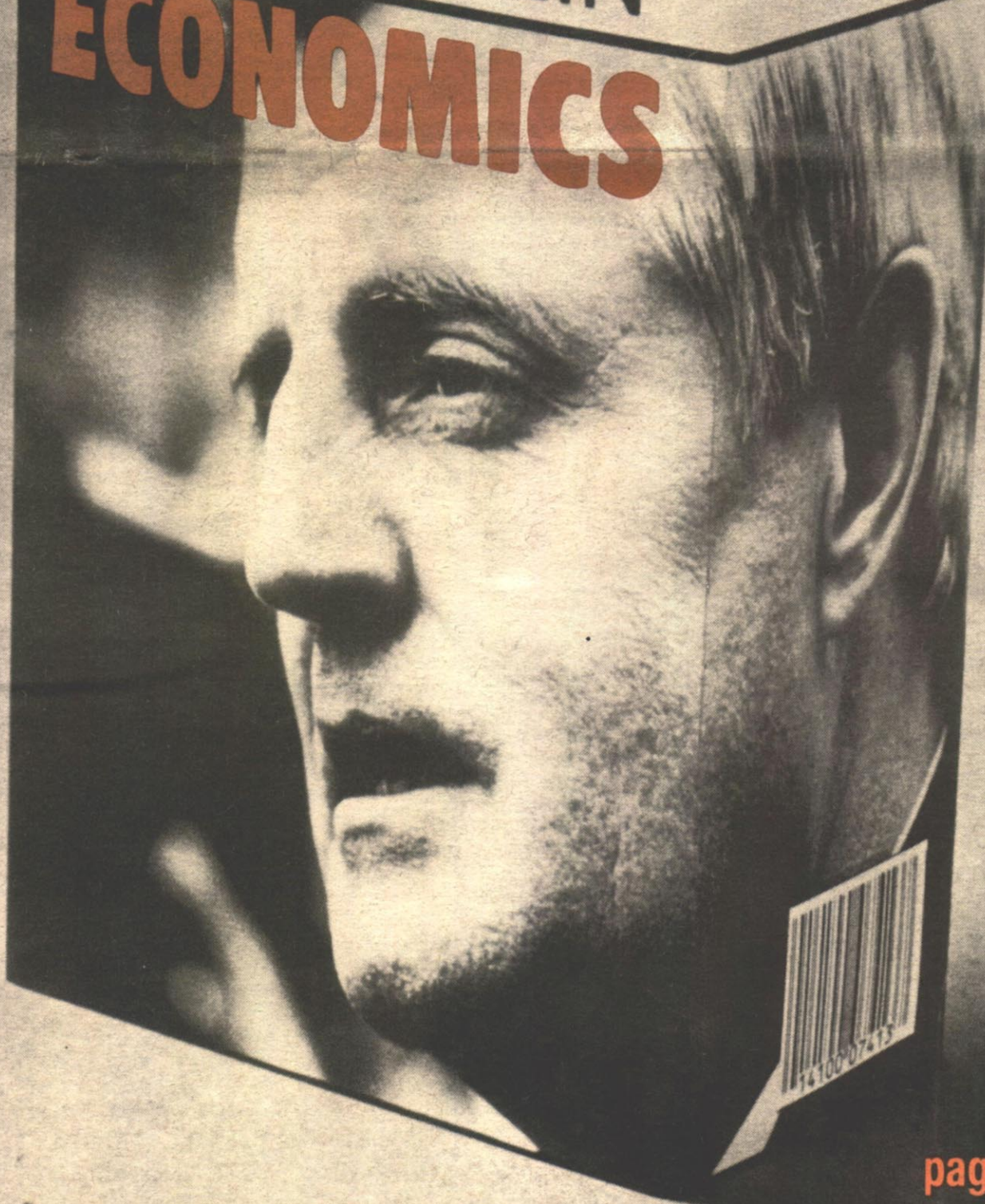
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ECONOMICS



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Continental airlines broke its union contract by declaring bankruptcy.

The legal noose closes on labor

By David Moberg

Labor law is about power. Expressly designed to promote "industrial peace," the landmark labor legislation of this century was also intended to redress, however slightly, the imbalance of power favoring employers. But in exchange for a modicum of legal recognition and acceptance as a junior—very junior—partner in the industrial world, labor was increasingly expected in amendments and varied court rulings to surrender some of its real source of power: collective action by workers.

Now weakened by its eroding membership, high unemployment, dramatic economic changes and a hostile political environment in no small part created by Ronald Reagan, organized labor, along with individual workers, is witnessing its legal rights shrink—a Reaganequity to match Reaganomics.

"The Reagan [National Labor Relations] Board [NLRB] is striking out on an incredibly significant rightward drift, not at all attentive to the delicate balance that even conservatives have respected," said Northeastern University labor law professor Karl Klare, who has often argued that distinctions between liberal and conservative labor law views are overstated. "I'm just blown away by these decisions."

Reeling from one blow after another by the NLRB and by the courts, labor unions have been trying to stem the tide. They responded quickly to the February Supreme Court ruling in the *Bildisco* case. That decision permitted companies trying to reorganize under Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Act unilaterally to cancel union contracts as soon as they petition for bankruptcy, without even having a hearing. A minority of four argued that the ruling endangered labor peace and ignored clear prohibitions of either labor or management unilaterally altering a contract in mid-term—subordinating everything to the bankruptcy goal of saving the company.

But the entire court agreed that a bankruptcy court could cancel a union contract if it was a "burden," as long as it attempted to "balance the equities" involved (a standard slightly stricter in theory than that for business creditors but less protective of labor than in previous court rulings).

Less than a month later the House of Representatives, in court-ordered bankruptcy reform, also prohibited unilateral cancellation of a union contract, required collective bargaining and allowed the court to reject a union contract only if otherwise jobs under the contract would be lost and the reorganization of the bankrupt company would fail.

With bankruptcies at Great Depression levels and at least 22 companies already having used bankruptcy to break contracts—most famously Continental Airlines and Wilson meatpacking—unions have reason to worry. But some effects will be more diffuse. "It changes the reality of the bargaining process itself," a House labor committee lawyer said. "You don't have to shoot the gun—just hold it."

"The basic objection is that [the *Bildisco* decision] puts too much authority in the hands of bankruptcy courts," Stanford law professor William Gould said. "Most bankruptcy judges don't know much about workers or labor law and tend to be unsympathetic."

It also treats labor as a commodity on the market and a labor contract as only slightly different from other contracts. One labor law expert said of *Bildisco* and recent NLRB decisions, "The basic

underlying assumption is that the only purpose of bargaining is for workers to make concessions. There is never the assumption that management would make concessions. Also, there is the assumption workers do not have democratic rights and claims on management even if it does not work to management's advantage."

But workers aren't like Acme Paper Clip, which is owed money for a box of office supplies by some bankrupt company. Workers depend for their livelihood on the job: it's not just one contract among many. And federal labor policy theoretically recognizes that the point of unionization is to raise wages; that's legitimate and should not be rolled back by a court without bargaining. Furthermore, the *Bildisco* decision rests on the theory that "employees have no investment stake and cannot be trusted to make intelligent judgments about where their interests lie," said James Atleson, law professor at State University of New York, Buffalo.

The bankruptcy legislation is currently stalemated in Congress with the House and Senate even divided on extension of their deadline between April 30 and May 25. Just before the earlier deadline, the Teamsters and Sen. Orrin Hatch (D-UT) had reached agreement on a Senate bill that would prohibit unilateral rejection but not change the bankruptcy standard. But the deal collapsed when the Chamber of Commerce and the AFL-CIO both balked. The differences within labor appeared tactical—how to get the best bill out of a House-Senate conference committee.

The tentative Senate bill had one advantage: as in most legislation, it would be effective when passed, leaving its application to current cases up to the courts. But Continental, employing lobbyists well-connected to the Democratic Party establishment, succeeded in getting current cases like theirs excluded in the House bill.

Although bankruptcy reform is labor's top legislative priority, the Reagan-dominated NLRB continues to evoke some of the loudest howls of pain from labor. Earlier this year the Board ruled in the *Milwaukee Spring* case (*In These Times*, Feb. 8) that a company could break a contract in mid-term by moving work out of one location for economic reasons after bargaining to an impasse. On April 6 the Board dropped the other shoe. In a case involving Otis Elevator's decision to move work of 40 technical employees to another state, the Board ruled that the company did not even have to bargain with the union, since "the decision turned not upon labor costs, but instead turned upon...a managerial decision of the sort which is at the core of entrepreneurial control."

"It's another action by the administration to totally unshackle business and allow them to do what they want without regard to workers," UAW attorney Michael Nicholson said. "It means a company can claim the reason for its move had nothing to do with labor costs and do whatever it wants." If such a small move by a huge company is considered key to "entrepreneurial control," he said, "what wouldn't come under this rule?" It is apparent from the decision that the Board, reversing its 1981 decision in the same case, could not conceive of any relevant action by the union except cutting wages, which would not have affected the decision.

Recent decisions by the board and courts have tended to weaken existing union contracts, expand the managerial rights of the employer, restrict the voice of unions and individual workers in their workplaces, increase judicial intervention on behalf of manage-

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ment and weaken union and individual powers of protest and grievance. With a huge backlog of cases, a growing propensity to delay or not issue injunctions against management law violations and a new policy of deferring increasingly to private arbitrators, the Board enforces the weakened law even less, as well.

The Board "is narrowing the scope of joint bargaining and narrowing the stake of labor in the enterprise, that is, narrowing the kinds of things communities and workers are allowed to speak about," Atleson said.

But he cautions that "it has never been clear how important labor law really is. Unions have been co-opted into believing their rights are determined by law. They will see these decisions as blows to their strength. But their strength doesn't flow from the law. Militancy alone accomplishes a lot irrespective of legal rules."

If the legal changes reflect capital's upper hand, a stronger labor movement—willing to take risks on solidarity and militancy—is needed to reverse the trend. Even if a Democrat wins the presidency, Reagan Board members and, if she is approved, a new conservative general counsel, Rosemary Collyer, will serve their five-year terms. Many unions will try to secure some rights through stronger contract language, but much-needed steps such as elimination of no-strike provisions or modification of management rights clauses will be very hard to win, and even lesser advances will not be easy.

Now labor law operates with a few basic assumptions, Atleson argues: concerted action by workers should be restrained except for narrow exceptions; the enterprise belongs to the employer alone; capital should move freely; production is the highest value. Workers need law based on new assumptions that they have rights to democracy, collective action and a property stake in the firm. Before they are likely to get that in law, they will first need more power.



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Nicaragua braces for U.S.-directed offensive

By Beth Stephens

MANAGUA, NICARAGUA

EASTER WEEKEND IN NICARAGUA is a time when the country traditionally grinds to a hot sweaty halt. Dead in the middle of the dry season, with the cooling rains a month away, Nicaragua bakes in the tropical sun. Government, schools and businesses usually close for the week as Nicaraguans search for relief from the grueling heat.

This year, however, Easter is dominated by the bloody reality of war. The vacation week has been cut in half because of the grave military situation. Fighting the heat-induced lethargy, the Sandinista leadership is rallying the country to battle the largest offensive to date in the war against the Nicaraguan revolution.

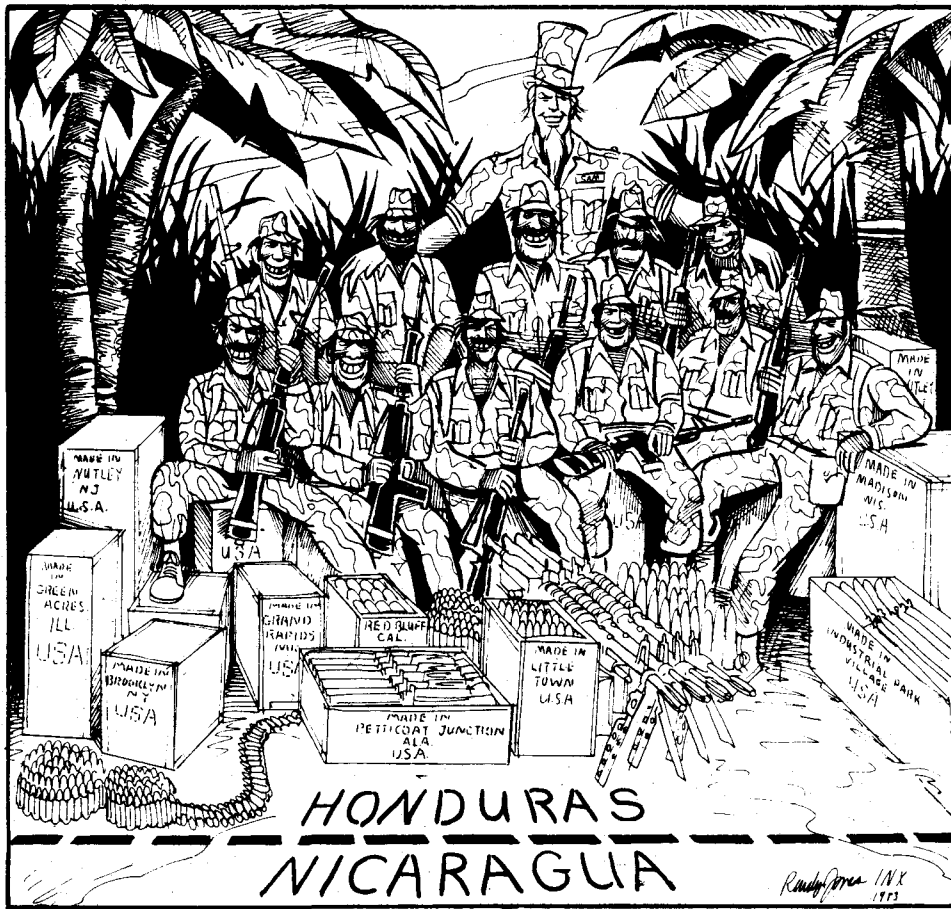
The high-financed counterrevolutionary offensive claimed its first victory in mid-April, when counterrevolutionaries or *contras* acting out of Costa Rica took control of the border village of San Juan del Norte and announced the formation of a provisional government. By April 17, the town had been retaken by the Sandinistas. The action had no strategic or military significance—once a fishing village of 340 people, San Juan del Norte was evacuated months ago because of constant *contra* attacks. What the *contras* “took” was a deserted border post defended by a small contingent of army troops.

The political and public-relations impact of the action are what concerns the *contras* and their U.S. sponsors. For more than a year, they’ve been trying to take a corner of Nicaraguan territory to provide a base for a parallel government that could challenge the Sandinistas. There have been persistent rumors that the U.S. would quickly recognize such a government and then accept its “requests” to invade Nicaragua.

Even Eden Pastora, the commander of the *contras* based in Costa Rica, in the end acknowledged that his “takeover” of San Juan del Norte meant little. More significant is the escalation of U.S. involvement in the war, both in naval and land operations, that made the attack on San Juan del Norte possible and that has resulted in increasingly damaging attacks on Nicaragua’s economy and population. “We are fighting an invasion by the most powerful country in the capitalist world,” Tomas Borge, minister of the interior and member of the nine-person Sandinista directorate, declared recently, as he called for redoubled efforts to meet the threat to Nicaragua.

“The U.S. has Nicaragua surrounded,” Daniel Ortega, head of the government junta and the Sandinista directorate, added a few days later. He reported that 11,000 *contra* troops were positioned near the northern and southern borders, while 600 mines have been planted around Nicaraguan ports.

The mining of the ports with sophisticated pressure-detonated mines is one sign of the U.S. escalation of the war in the last two months. The mines were planted by CIA operatives working out of U.S. ships stationed off the Nicaraguan coast—not by their *contra* clients. But in addition, Nicaraguan military intelligence officials report that the CIA has reorganized the *contra* land forces into regional commands coordinated by the CIA and backed by an “almost inexhaustible” stream of U.S. arms, ammunition and supplies, as well as intelligence information, communications and an “unparalleled” level of logistical support.



Traveling in 500-man task forces, the *contras* have been attacking frontier towns and isolated villages on both borders of the mountainous, nearly inaccessible central region of the country. In addition to their equipment and technical support, they now boast another advantage the financially strapped Nicaraguans cannot match: cash. In a country where a professional earns 6,000 to 7,000 *cordobas* a year, the *contras* are reportedly offering recruits \$500 a month—equal to 14,000 *cordobas* at the legal exchange rate, but an incredible 50,000 *cordobas* on the black market. The task forces are also said to be traveling with huge wads of *cordobas* that they spend freely, buying help from poor peasants by offering them more money than they can earn in years.

Keeping the faith.

Revolutionary Nicaraguans, however, have a tremendous faith in their ability to surmount financial and technical disadvantages. “They may have money, but they don’t have ‘*patria, libre o morir*,’” (free homeland or death, the motto of the Sandinistas), says a young Sandinista who just returned from three months fighting on the southern front. “They can buy help from the poor peasants, but they can’t buy their commitment or their courage. We have that.”

The faith that commitment and courage can overcome technical shortcomings is being applied in the battle against the U.S. mines. Nicaragua doesn’t own a mine sweeper and no country has yet come through with the loan of one. Yet scubadivers are slowly searching the ocean floor to locate the mines. Assisting them in the dangerous job is a fleet of small fishing boats—who travel through the ports ahead of the ocean tankers trailing long lines behind them, hoping to detonate the mines without causing damage. They have also tried to put dynamite underwater in an attempt to detonate the mines harmlessly.

“We’re using the most rudimentary methods to detonate the mines,” Defense Minister Humberto Ortega said last month before leaving on a trip to seek technical and military assistance abroad. Two weeks later the minister of commerce announced proudly that the scuba divers had effectively detonated 29 mines. With hundreds more remaining below, a faster and surer method will have to be found.

Meanwhile, the mines are having an impact on Nicaragua’s shipping that will soon be felt in the economy. As of mid-April four ships had been damaged by the mines—with costs to the ship owners and the Nicaraguan government of more than \$9 million—and six have refused to enter Nicaraguan ports, going instead to Costa Rica. Five thousands tons of goods have been sidetracked, including 1,000 tons of milk, medical supplies and sorely needed spare parts for factories. The majority of the commerce in the ports continues unabated—but in an economy that is already stripped down to the necessities, any delay or missed shipments will be acutely felt.

Nicaraguans are not resting much hope on the possibility that Congress will alter Reagan’s aggressive policies toward the revolution, despite the recent Senate and House condemnation of the mining of the ports. “The same U.S. senators who approved \$21 million to intensify the war

In the midst of the increasingly feverish talk of war, plans for the national elections in November go forward.

against Nicaragua now blush for the mining of the ports,” Tomas Borge says. “What do these gentlemen think? That those millions of dollars were going to be spent to plant flowers and vegetables?”

With the aggression likely to get worse, Nicaragua’s leadership is preparing for a long ordeal. Recent statements by the top leadership have reminded Nicaraguans that the country’s economic difficulties—shortages and inflation—are the result of the war. They have warned that greater difficulties are in store.

Costly defense.

Figures released this month put the total losses due to the counterrevolution at 10.4 billion *cordobas*, or \$370 million, which is an astronomical figure in an underdeveloped nation. The burden of financing the defense of the country has siphoned money from needed development projects, many of which have been suspended or postponed. *Contra* attacks have been targeted at aggressive, innovative government programs—cooperatives, child development centers, literacy campaigns, health posts—and at the most vulnerable points of the economic infrastructure—petroleum depots, bridges, trucks and tractors. Roads in some parts of the country have been mined as well, interfering with the transport of the harvest to the city.

Despite the tightening economy and the increased fighting in the frontiers and in the mountains, Managua and most of the western parts of the country have been somewhat isolated from the war. The bombing of the airport in September was the only act of war within Managua.

The major themes of Tomas Borge’s recent speech was the need to share the burden of the war more equally among the different social classes and different areas of the country. “It’s said here that there are ‘war zones,’” but in reality “there is one war zone and it is Nicaragua,” he said. “All of us are at war... we in the Pacific are living in an artificial, subsidized normality... while vacationers are tanning in the sun, while we walk calmly through the streets and complain about rationing in the supermarkets, at the same time hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans are suffering direct consequences of aggression, fighting not for housing and food, but to avoid being assassinated.” Redistributing the burden of that aggression will probably mean more shortages in the cities as supplies are reserved for those on the front, and an increased use of the draft to involve more city dwellers directly in the fighting.

In the midst of the increasingly feverish talk of war, plans for the national elections in November go forward. Sandinista leaders say that only direct intervention by the U.S. will interrupt the electoral calendar. An electoral council has been established to supervise the campaign, headed by the supreme court with representatives from the different political parties. A media law, designed to guarantee all political parties access to the media, will be discussed in a legislative session opening May 4.

Carlos Nunez, head of the legislature and member of the Sandinista directorate, recently stressed the importance of the election to the Sandinistas and predicted “a great plebiscite in which the whole country will mobilize to ratify the revolutionary program.” The opposition parties continue to threaten to pull out, but the whole issue of the election campaign, which seemed so important in February and March, has taken on an aspect of unreality. Everything pales before the urgency of the military situation.

Reagan administration officials were recently quoted as saying that the mining of the Nicaraguan port was a “holding action,” designed to maintain pressure until after the U.S. election. For now, Nicaraguans can do no more than adjust to meet the consequences of that holding action, while girding themselves for escalations that may follow.

Beth Stephens is an American lawyer living in Nicaragua.

Election blitz

Recalcitrant Iranians choosing to flee Tehran rather than vote in national elections on April 15 caused day-long traffic jams on streets leading from the capital city, reports Massoud Ramvat. Despite the Ayatollah Khomeini's imposition of a "full alert" and the readiness of the revolutionary guard and patrol units to assure a large and enthusiastic voter turnout, thousands of Iranians chose not to participate in the "mock elections" for the 270-member Islamic Consultative Assembly. In the city of Ahvaz, three-fourths of the balloting booths were closed early because of the low voter turnout.

The National Council of Resistance in Iran—claiming that the election was a fraud because of Khomeini's brutal silencing of the opposition since his 1979 takeover—engineered a boycott campaign weeks before the election date. The underground opposition fought Khomeini's control of election publicity with their own well-chosen tactics: exploding "publicity bombs," releasing balloons that distributed "boycott election" leaflets and throwing paint-filled eggs at the regime's election posters. Apparently their campaign worked. Despite the possibility of reprisals in a country where birth certificates are stamped to prove people have voted, the opposition claims the substantial voter decrease will further deflate Khomeini's credibility at home.

Greensboro 9 acquitted

"I feel terrific," said Edward Dawson after he and eight other Ku Klux Klan and Nazi defendants were acquitted last week by an all-white jury in Winston-Salem, N.C., on civil rights violations in the 1979 killing of five members of the Communist Workers Party, reports Alex Charns. Dawson—who was involved in the shooting as a paid informer for the Greensboro police—told *In These Times* that "the jury felt one side was just as guilty as the other." Jury Foreman Ronald Johnson agreed with Dawson, telling reporters that it was the anti-Klan demonstrators who provoked the violence at the Greensboro "Death to the Klan" rally by banging sticks on cars driven by the Klan. The jury agreed with the defense claim that political, not racial, motivations prompted the white supremacists to fire at the protesters. The federal government had the burden of proving that the defendants were motivated by racial hatred—a narrow claim that proved to be impossible to ascertain.

Dale Sampson, wife of slain Communist Workers Party (CWP) member William Sampson, told *In These Times* she was "not surprised" even "after four and a half years of overwhelming evidence of guilt due to the cover-up by the government of its own involvement in the deaths." She pointed to the role played by police informant Dawson and a federal undercover agent as evidence of a conspiracy. Survivors of the rally and their supporters are focusing their attention on the \$48 million civil suit scheduled to begin in August. The suit charges that federal, state and local officials conspired with the Nazis and the Klan to violate the rights of the demonstrators.

ULW wins strike

Chicago's Legal Assistance Foundation (LAF)—serving 25,000 poor clients each year for free—entered 1984 with a \$2 million surplus, reports Tom Johnson. The extra money came from a rapidly increasing caseload that's covered by federal funds and by successful battles by LAF workers in court that added hundreds of thousands of dollars in fees to the foundation's coffers.

But the 60 lawyers and 70 paralegal and support staff of the United Legal Workers Union (ULW) did not benefit from LAF's unexpected fortune. Overworked and underpaid, they went on strike in early April, demanding a pay increase, an affirmative action program, assurances of larger staffing in neighborhood offices and a better staff training program. On April 12 these demands were met in a two-year contract greeted with great enthusiasm by ULW workers. One program that LAF refused to fund—a program that would ensure employees are paid for the duration of their illness—will now be overseen by the union as sick days will be pooled in a "sick bank" to protect workers with poor health.

Sherry Estes, spokeswoman for ULW, lauded the strength of a union that's largely made up of single minority women who support families. She said that the LAF "played on elitist attitudes that many lawyers have toward so-called non-professional paralegals and service workers. But they couldn't divide us by occupation, sex or race."

His daily bread

Everybody's turning to religion these days. Candy bar magnate Forrest Mars—head of the largest private enterprise in the U.S. with estimated \$4 billion in sales—was recently named to *Fortune* magazine's business hall of fame. Assessing his own spiritual practices, he told his executives, "I am a religious man. I pray for Milky Way, I pray for Snickers...."

—Beth Maschinot



Protesting U.S. intervention in Central America, 10 national leaders from the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) were arrested and charged with "unlawful assembly" on the White House grounds April 15. Meanwhile, in San Francisco, 191 anti-interventionists were arrested while protesting a talk given by Henry Kissinger at the San Francisco Hilton hotel.

Congressional update: Immigration "reform" scheduled for vote

WASHINGTON—In the next few weeks the House of Representatives will vote on legislation that will affect thousands of illegal immigrant farm laborers, domestic farm laborers, and their employers. The three pieces of legislation—the Simpson-Mazzoli Immigration Reform and Control Act, the Panetta Seasonal Foreign Worker Program Amendment and the Roybal Immigration Reform Act—seek different solutions to the recent surge of immigrants seeking jobs in the U.S.

for H-2 workers—increasing the possibility of freezing out domestic workers from jobs.

Farm labor advocates also are concerned that the immigrant workers may be inadequately protected by the bill. Under current Department of Labor (DOL) regulations, H-2 workers are guaranteed a written employment contract that specifies a minimum period of employment and a minimum wage as well as free tools and transportation home. But the only guarantees explicitly spelled out in S-M are



Many farm labor advocates, including the United Farm Workers and the American Friends Service Committee, oppose the Simpson-Mazzoli (S-M) bill because it loosens restrictions on the current H-2 temporary worker program and imposes sanctions against employers who knowingly hire undocumented aliens.

As it stands now, the H-2 program brings foreign workers to the U.S. on a limited and strictly contracted basis only. The S-M bill, however, eliminates a currently required recruitment period for domestic workers and shortens the application period

for housing and workman's compensation.

The major way in which the bill strengthens enforcement against the use of illegal foreign workers is by penalizing employers who hire them. Although employer sanctions seem justified, farm labor groups maintain that (because most undocumented aliens are Hispanic) the sanctions will only discourage growers from hiring any Hispanics—whether documented or not.

One proposed amendment to the S-M bill, Rep. Leon Panetta's (D-CA) Seasonal Foreign Worker Program, would create a massive "guest worker" program to

import 500,000 workers each year, up from the present 20,000.

The Panetta amendment does not require employers to hire domestic workers before applying for guest workers, nor does it ask the DOL to set a minimum wage for farm workers to ensure that foreign workers do not undercut domestic wages.

Also, unlike H-2 workers, foreigners coming in under the Panetta program would be ineligible for federal or legal aid, eliminating their most effective recourse against violations.

Agricultural growers say that they need a guest worker program because there is a shortage of domestic workers in the perishable crop industry. Farmworker groups, however, reply that most "shortages" are caused by domestic workers who refuse to accept jobs under abysmal conditions. Consequently, the importation of foreigners who would work under almost any circumstances only undermines the bargaining power of all farmworkers.

On February 23, Rep. Edward Roybal (D-CA), leader of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, introduced a bill that steps up the enforcement of existing regulations to protect workers and discourages employer violations.

The Roybal bill also establishes a National Commission of Immigration to study the impact of undocumented workers on the agricultural economy. The Commission would also make recommendations for economic development programs in Latin America to improve the conditions that force people to come to the U.S. at any cost in order to find work.

The S-M bill will be scheduled for a vote by the House sometime in the beginning or middle of May. Although it has been passed twice by the Senate, the controversy surrounding the bill makes its chances of becoming law hard to predict. The Panetta amendment has been voted out of the House Agriculture Committee and may well receive floor attention. Rep. Roybal's bill, however, is still pending in the House Judiciary subcommittee on Immigration and may never receive full House attention.

—Leda Hartman

ON THE LIST OF A CANDIDATE'S political necessities, a party platform probably does not rank too high. Certainly it falls several notches below a portable hair dryer. Although each election year party regulars meet to compose a platform, it is rarely mentioned after the election.

Nevertheless, the Democratic Party began its drafting process on April 9, when it convened the first of six public hearings on its 1984 platform. Judging from the first hearing—dedicated to foreign policy and national security concerns and held at the Sheraton Centre Hotel in New York City—one should not expect a break from tradition, that is, a forceful and meaningful document resolving the party's internal ideological disputes.

Predictably, party leaders repeatedly sounded the call for unity and urged, in the words of Rep. Geraldine Ferraro, chair of the platform committee, "a thematic, short document that all of us can run on." Charles Manatt, chair of the Democratic National Committee, also put in a plug for succinctness, calling for the platform committee "to be guided by the principle 'less can be more.'" In short, brevity seemed more the prize than working out the obvious differences on arms control and foreign policy existing within the party.

These differences, though evident throughout the day-long session, received little direct attention from party leaders who sought to rally around an anti-Reagan banner. At a lunch for the platform committee provided by Philip Morris (so don't expect any attacks on tobacco subsidies in this year's platform), Ferraro asked, "Where are the big differences in the Democratic Party?" The answer

Judging from the first hearing, one should not expect a break from tradition.

should have been: they're everywhere. For example, what's to be done about the arms race? About Central America?

But instead, she answered, "The big differences are between the Democrats and the Republicans." Even Sen. Alan Cranston, who is trying to buck the party establishment with his own peace plank, refused to comment on the opposition he is meeting within the party.

Instead there was much hubris and self-righteousness. After all, Manatt trumpeted, the Democrats have increased their number of public platform hearings from four to six this year, while the Republicans have cancelled theirs, in lieu of "disent-free, stage-managed, politically choreographed town meetings." Score one for the Democrats.

But it appears unlikely that the party will actually pay heed to its rank and file when it constructs its platform and makes the hard decisions. Ultimately, the fudge factor may come to dominate, to the disadvantage of those left-leaning Democrats pressing for strong and specific stands on U.S. nuclear policy and intervention in Central America.

Throughout the morning session, prominent Democrats—including Senators Daniel Moynihan and Christopher Dodd and former Undersecretary of Defense Walter Slocum—testified and answered questions before the platform committee, outlining their visions of a Democratic foreign policy.

So did other notables, including historian Barbara Tuchman, scientist Sidney Drell and Bill Curry of Freeze Voter '84. There was also, as Ferraro called it, a panel of "victims of oppression"—South African Dennis Brutus; William Ford, the brother of Ita Ford, a Maryknoll nun slain in El Salvador; and Leszek Walis-

zewski of the Solidarity National Commission.

At the end of their testimony, however, Ferraro ruled there was no time left for questions. The "victims" departed, and next up was Ben Wattenberg of the conservative Coalition for a Democratic Majority, who delivered a paean for the late Henry Jackson and argued that El Salvador "clearly needs military help to raise a military shield" against Moscow-backed insurgency.

Not surprisingly, the morning session

the party ideologically. But it faces tough opposition. While popular with some committee members, it did not go over well with some of the party's bigger guns, who, nevertheless, kept citing arms control as the key to a November victory. "We must never let the U.S. people forget that the current administration has failed" in arms control, Rep. Norman Dicks testified.

But it was Dicks who, along with several other moderate Democrats, engineered a "compromise" measure a year ago

CAMPAIGN '84

Democrats build a platform over wide party divisions

showed that the Democratic Party really does not know what it stands for. No consensus exists on nuclear arms or on a strategy for Central America. When pressed by a reporter to say how the Democrats differ ideologically from the Republicans, Ferraro, who is advertised as a potential running mate, balked. What could she say? The anti-intervention party? Not quite. The party that wants no more missiles? Not really.

All through the day, the various ideological wings that each place a claim on the Democratic Party clashed, often but not always in a quiet fashion. New York Mayor Edward Koch in his welcoming address presented a blistering attack on the new "isolationism" of fellow Democrats and called for a "strong foreign policy" that stands up to the Soviets and Cubans.

Dodd later rebutted Koch to the applause of the committee's members. Moynihan, terming nuclear weapons "our number one challenge," spoke out strongly against the MX missile, but advocated the development of the mobile Midgetman missile. He also maintained it was essential that the Democrats articulate a foreign policy that stands as a significant alternative to the Reagan administration's.

Moynihan was then taken to task by one member of the platform committee who suggested the party look to the freeze, rather than the Midgetman, as the cornerstone of its arms control strategy. "My proposal and the freeze are not mutually exclusive," Moynihan responded, without further explanation.

And another committee member challenged the senator, asking, "How can you say we must differentiate our views from Reagan's when you have voted for aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*?" For some time now, Moynihan replied, many House and Senate Democrats have supported such aid. That was the point.

Many of the platform committee members—about 50 of the committee's 25 permanent and 159 temporary members were present—undoubtedly represented the more left elements of the party. For instance, the Massachusetts and Wisconsin delegates issued calls for the adoption of a proposed peace plank introduced by Cranston. Drafted by a panel headed by Jerome Wiesner, President Kennedy's science advisor, the far-reaching plank calls for a new Democratic president to halt nuclear warhead testing and the testing and deployment of all ballistic and cruise missiles in the first hour of his administration. This moratorium, the draft says, should continue "so long as the Soviets do the same." It also includes moratoria on the Trident submarine, the B-1 and Stealth bombers, anti-satellite weapons and all weapons in outer space, urges the adoption of a no-first-use policy and outlines a program for deep reductions in nuclear armaments.

Cranston's proposal, if adopted, would certainly allow Ferraro to define

that led to House approval of Reagan's request for the first batch of MX missiles. And Dicks still supports the MX, though he favors cutting the number of missiles in this year's request. In an interview with *In These Times*, Dicks noted tentative support for the moratorium idea. "Nothing else has worked well," he said. "We ought to look at it and perhaps give it a chance." Yet at the same time, he stressed the importance of modernizing



Geraldine Ferraro, possible VP candidate?

certain aspects of our nuclear arsenal (to achieve "stability") and advocated the MX as a bargaining chip.

Representing the traditional approach, Moynihan put it best. After attacking the Reagan record on arms control before the committee, he added, "Democrats should stick to the policy that has kept nuclear peace for decades"—in other words, business as usual, without the Reagan excesses.

Moynihan later told *In These Times* that he opposes the moratorium concept.

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"It may sound silly," he said, "but we have to deploy a new missile system some day. Not just to have one, but to preserve our deterrent."

And how does he square this with his purported support for the freeze? "I'll negotiate a freeze with anyone," Moynihan answered. "But we're talking about maintaining a deterrent, and that's worth fighting for."

Cranston has pledged to continue to press his plank—all the way to the convention. The presence of allies on the platform committee now is encouraging. But that may well change, as temporary members, who presently compose the majority of the committee, are replaced with permanent members. (Of the final members of the committee, 25 are party leaders and already selected; the rest will be elected by each state's convention delegates, thereby reflecting the standing of the candidates.)

The deliberations of the platform committee, of course, will not necessarily affect the actions of the next president. The platform does provide, however, a forum for issue-oriented Democrats who want to keep the pressure on the candidates and then the nominee. And a convention fight may involve the platform, as Jesse Jackson and issues-oriented delegates demand specific planks in return for supporting a candidate. (Jackson now says a plank opposing run-off primary elections must be adopted before he supports either Gary Hart or Walter Mondale.)

But from Manatt's perspective, the platform process is little more than good P.R. for the party—as well as for Ferraro. Yet despite Manatt's outpourings, the party's platform procedure does not sug-

gest the most democratic way to build a platform. It's a debate before a body that will change its composition and that expresses little interest in hearing lesser-known members of the party.

During the afternoon session, when individuals who had signed up to give testimony in this exercise of the "democratic process" spoke their piece, they faced panels dominated by empty seats, as committee members drifted away. So much for citizen input.

David Corn is senior editor of *Nuclear Times*.

By Diana Johnstone

B O N N

THE GERMAN GREEN PARTY has rallied around a color, not a line. The color expresses an immediate and intuitive point of encounter for people who arrive from a wide range of political backgrounds.

With typical German philosophical thoroughness, Greens pursue their intuition in analyses that inevitably diverge. Yet after four years as a national party and one year in the Bundestag, they are still hanging together.

In Europe the '70s ushered in a decade of "red" sectarianism that nearly turned the whole Western left landscape into a desert. Now, in the '80s, only in West Germany has such a large far left survived the decline of orthodox Marxism and the collapse of the dogmatic left, thanks to this change of color that is in reality a drastic change in historic vision.

"The left hasn't forgotten its Marx, but sees urgent ecological problems that weren't there when Marx wrote," says

Green "fundamentalists" who want to stick to principle and "realists" who want to seek effective action (notably through eventual cooperation with the Social Democratic Party [SPD]) is not so much a factional split as an unavoidable two-way pull felt by all Greens.

Even such a "realist" as Joschka Fischer warns that as the party "degenerates more and more into an electoral union," it loses clout in parliament. "We could allow ourselves a lot more in parliament if the extraparliamentary side were more strongly developed," he said recently.

And the "fundamentalists" are not so

concerning the environment, and therefore don't want to miss such opportunities by focusing exclusively on potential alliance with the SPD.

The problem of rotation.

On the one side, the present 27 Green Bundestag members (with a couple of idealistic exceptions) want to serve out their four-year terms. On the other, the follow-up team of *Nachrucker* is waiting impatiently to take over their seats next year, midway through the four-year elected term, according to the controversial rotation principle adopted by the Green Party before last year's elections.

WEST GERMANY

Greens: tangled, but not wilted



Says Joschka Fischer, former party floor leader, "The Greens are a parliamentary, not a revolutionary party."

Waltraud Schoppe, the new spokeswoman for the Green Bundestag fraction.

Part of the change is a lucid acceptance by party members of who they are, which is *not* the vanguard of a potentially revolutionary working class. "The Greens are a parliamentary, not a revolutionary party," says ex-floor leader Joschka Fischer. "Anyone who thinks he can make a revolution with a party whose members mostly come from the social-service professions should give it a try."

Unlike the old Communist parties, the Greens' schizophrenia is not between being revolutionary and being parliamentary, but between being a parliamentary party and a social protest movement. The publicized split between

much against compromise as against an early institutionalized compromise with the Social Democrats that would prevent the Greens from developing their full original potential.

How to deal with the SPD is the Green's toughest problem by far. It is no secret that the SPD hopes to strangle the Greens in its embrace and recuperate their main issues, appropriately watered down. Naturally the Greens want to defend themselves, and naturally they disagree as to how.

A major motivation of the Greens in these dealings is to try to exercise a favorable influence on the SPD's own development. All Green Bundestag members agree on the need to deal with the SPD, if only to push it to clarify its own position on certain key issues. Their analysis is that the SPD itself is in an historic crisis, torn between conflicting tendencies, and very unsure of where it is going. Should Greens give priority to strengthening the left within the SPD, or try to win it away from the SPD altogether?

Another consideration is that Greens feel they can appeal to part of the traditional Christian Democratic constituency (such as small farmers) on some issues

Unwillingness to be rotated is considered to be one reason Gen. Gert Bastion withdrew from the Green fraction on February 9.

SPD party manager Peter Glotz recently predicted the Greens would "rotate themselves to death" on the national level by 1987.

Waltraud Schoppe thinks that the party will eventually change the rotation period from two to four years. "I think we should be allowed more time for such a difficult job," she said. But this first lot came in on those terms and will no doubt have to stick to them.

For all their problems, the German Greens look like an enviable success when seen from the bleak left landscapes of most other Western countries. With European parliamentary elections coming up, some neighbors have shown an interest in importing the franchise. But the genuine German product is not easy to export.

This showed up at a March 31-April 1 meeting in Liege, Belgium, meant to be a "first European congress of Greens" representing groups from Holland, Belgium, France, England, Ireland, Sweden and Germany. Several groups were narrowly ecological and politically conserva-

tive compared to the German Greens. A small Dutch "Green" group was there, but the recently formed Dutch "Green Progressive Alliance" (GAP) of three political parties with parliamentary representatives was excluded because one was the Dutch Communist Party. The other two are the Pacifist Socialist Party and the Radical Party.

Uli Tost of the German Greens objected strongly to this exclusion. The word "green" or "ecological" was a mere embellishment, he said, which did not prove anything. What mattered was programmatic content. Moreover, said Tost, the German Greens had been built by an historical process of merging different political tendencies, not by someone setting up shop with the "Green" sign. Thus from their own experience, the German Greens looked favorably on the Dutch merger experiment with the "Green Progressive Alliance." And since the GAP was more likely to get into the European parliament than the small Green group, they would look pretty silly excluding it. Tost asked that both the Greens and the Green Progressive Alliance be let in.

Jonathan Porritt of the British "Ecology Party" complained that the Germans were trying to run things. Finally, a compromise was reached: whoever got elected would be recognized.

The problem is delicate because the other groups want the German Green name, and sometimes German Green money, but not the German Green politics.

A special case is *Les Verts*, a new French Green party recently formed by a merger process applauded by the Greens. French law requires parties to pay for their own ballots in the European elections, for which they will be reimbursed if they cross the 5 percent hurdle. This amounts to nearly half a million dollars that the sprouting *Verts* do not have. The German Greens are willing to help, but fear they will be accused of buying the French if they lend the whole sum and accused of putting political pressure if they give less. And if the French Greens get less than 5 percent of the vote, the German Greens will not get a *pfennig* back.

Electorally, the Greens have done well recently. In the March 18 Bavarian municipal elections, the Greens won nearly 8 percent in Munich (where the SPD got city hall back from the conservative Christian Social Union) and did well enough throughout the state to replace the Free Democratic Party as third party.

Similar and even more significant results were registered in the March 25 state elections in neighboring Baden-Württemberg. Despite a sloppy campaign (three districts were lost because the party simply forgot to register its candidates), the Green score rose from 5.3 percent in 1980 to 8 percent. In this traditional liberal stronghold, some of the gains were at the expense of the Free Democratic Party (FDP), which sank to fourth place. The FDP has been losing its claim to liberalism, as it becomes identified as the party of big money and corruption. The Greens also won young voters away from the SPD. In the university town of Tübingen, the Greens got 20 percent.

Baden-Württemberg is where all the American Pershing II nuclear missiles are stationed. But the big issue accounting for the Green vote increase was without any doubt *Waldsterben*, the dying forest. In the hillsides of the Black Forest and surrounding regions, the evergreens are turning brown. The Greens were not taken seriously when they first began warning that acid rain was killing the forests. But now there's evidence. In 1982, 8 percent of German trees were afflicted; one year later the percentage had jumped to 34 percent. In 1984 at least half the trees in Baden-Württemberg are dying.

Green state legislator Rezzo Schlauch is looking forward to municipal elections next October. "This is the level where we can really display competence," he said. The Greens' greatest success has been holding up such harmful projects as atomic power plants long enough for them to cease to be economically interesting. Said Schlauch, "The Greens do three times as much work as the representatives of other parties in local government." ■

How to deal with the SPD is the Greens' toughest problem thus far.

Surprise was a factor contributing to the women's success in taking over the leadership of the German Green Party's Bundestag fraction on the evening of April 3. Here's how it happened.

All day the 27 Green Bundestag members and their "tag team" *Nachrucker* (who accompanied them to Bonn in accordance with the party's rotation rule), had been discussing the scheduled rotation. Should they keep or change the leaders they chose last year?

The three Green speakers, Petra Kelly, Otto Schily and Marieluise Beck-Oberdorf, had almost been too successful as media stars. They had tended to go their own way and had not functioned as a team. Lawyer Schily was under attack for using his position to promote a policy of cooperation with the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which has been contested by many Greens. The charismatic Petra Kelly seemed close to physical and emotional exhaustion.

Yet despite much frank criticism, the fraction was reluctant to disavow its leaders. It was dinnertime and the marathon meeting was heading wearily for a vote expressing confidence in the incumbent leaders. Suddenly, Marieluise Beck-Oberdorf looked up demurely from her knitting and delivered the bombshell. She said she remained determined not to continue in the speaker's office. But that morning, the women's council had met and come up with a solution, she announced. They were offering a group candidacy of six women to fill the speaker and floor leader jobs.

Beck-Oberdorf said her experience with Schily had shown that if there were even one man in the speaker group, he would take charge and the journalists would all turn to him as the "serious" spokesperson. Thus the only way to make sure that women really exercised leadership was to exclude men altogether. This was the chance for the Greens to show they could practice a truly new type of politics.

The men were flabbergasted. Yet some must have welcomed this unexpectedly roundabout way to demote Schily, because only Green floor leader Joschka Fischer and his supporters voted against the principle of selecting an all-women leadership.

However, several men said that they would at least like to decide which women would be selected. This was not possible, the women's council explained. They had chosen six who felt they could work well together, who understood each other's child-care problems

All power to the women



The new team (left to right): Antje Vollmer, Waltraud Schoppe, Annemarie Borgmann, Heidemarie Dann, Erika Hickel, Christa Nickels.

and could help each other to assume more political responsibility than was usually possible for women. The idea was to develop a model of collective leadership more responsive than in the past to the party as a whole. If any of the six were rejected, no woman would be available to run. It was all or nothing—take it or leave it.

By 11:00 p.m., the men had taken it all. There were bouquets of flowers and champagne for the new speakers: Waltraud Schoppe, Antje Vollmer and Annemarie Borgmann, and the new floor leaders Christa Nickels, Heidemarie Dann and Erika Hickel.

Much press comment was predictably sarcastic about the "Green Valkyries routing poor little men with their tails between their legs" (ha ha). But women Bundestag members of the old established parties were favorably impressed. The magazine *Der Spiegel* commented that SPD leaders who hoped to attract women to their party would be especially embarrassed. The April 3 coup was a demonstration that women who want to be active politically should join the Greens.

him come back."

The new speaker spoke admiringly of her predecessor Petra Kelly, stressing that the speaker role had nothing to do with Petra's valuable international work "which can and must continue," Schoppe said.

The Greens are generally in agreement about what they want, and the much-publicized disagreements are about ways and means, she said. Women tend not to get involved in the various factional debates. But some factions take a "pro-woman" position, arguing, for example, against cooperation with labor unions because they view labor as a force of the past and women as a force of the future.

This is one reason Schoppe believes it is important for women to develop political positions of their own. Obviously she foresees opportunities for finding solutions to many of the contradictions among male factions.

The new team is well aware, however, that its failure is eagerly awaited by legions of defenders of patriarchal order. Antje Vollmer said she was reminded of when she was making church history as the first unmarried woman Protestant pastor with a baby on the way. "I have exactly the feeling today I had then—that I'd better make this one turn out to be a success. —Diana Johnstone

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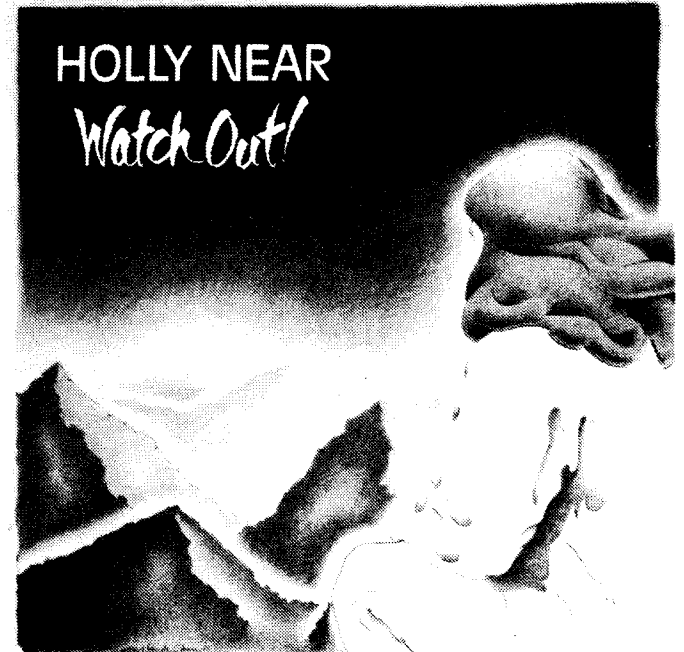
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By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

FORMER VICE-PRESIDENT Walter Mondale's economic philosophy is both different from and preferable to President Ronald Reagan's free-market economics. Mondale recognizes that government must play a role not only in stimulating consumer demand and business investment, but also in directing investment toward productive uses. He has incorporated economist Robert Reich's critique of "paper entrepreneurialism" into his campaign speeches on economics and is also more committed than Reagan to using government to alleviate the pains of poverty and unemployment.

Yet the important question about Mondale's economics is not whether they are preferable to Reagan's—almost any Democrat's are—but whether they can achieve the measure of prosperity that he claims they will. Mondale has made his commitment to jobs—symbolized by the reiteration of his role in the 1979 Chrysler Corporation bailout—the central theme of his campaign against Sen. Gary Hart.

He has also frequently declared his commitment to full employment policies. "We must have an American policy that deals with our economic problems, but includes a commitment to employ all Americans who want a job in this country," Mondale told his supporters in a Washington speech last September.

When Mondale's views are evaluated in this light, they come up wanting. Neither Mondale's economic assumptions nor his current proposals are adequate to reverse the present slide toward deeper recession and more tenuous recoveries. If Reagan deceived voters in 1980 by promising to balance the budget by 1983, Mondale may be deceiving voters—including his labor backers—by suggesting that his policies will eventually restore the high employment and low inflation that the U.S. enjoyed in the '60s.

Shock theory.

Since Mondale's programs remain extremely sketchy—the four-year budget proposal that he released last January consisted of a four-page handout—it is important to examine the general assumptions that underlie them. His fiscal and monetary policies reflect his attenuated commitment to the Democrats' post-World War II neo-Keynesianism, while his industrial policies reflect an eclectic blend of labor and neo-liberal influences.

When he first entered the Senate in 1965, liberal Democrats believed that they could use fiscal policy to eliminate recessions altogether and achieve continuous prosperity. But during the '70s these liberals, including Mondale, found this assumption challenged by continuing high unemployment and inflation. Some neo-liberals, like Hart and Sen. Paul Tsongas, turned away from neo-Keynesianism, accepting the conservative view that Keynesian intervention in the economy was itself a cause of stagnation.

But Mondale, following the lead of former Johnson administration economist Otto Eckstein and other leading Democrats, embraced what might be called the "shock theory." According to this view, the stagnation of the '70s was caused by external shocks that were delivered to the economy—first, the Vietnam war, then the energy crisis. Given these shocks, no economic policy could achieve high employment and low inflation.

The shock theory justified the failure of Democratic policies in to achieve stable prosperity in the late '70s, and it also preserved the hope that once the shocks

wore off, neo-Keynesian policies could be employed successfully again.

In explaining the basis of Mondale's current proposals, his senior aides invoke the shock theory. According to one senior aide, Mondale is "committed as anyone could possibly be to the most rapid progress to high employment," but he realizes that, because of "the shocks the economy has suffered," it will not be possible to achieve his goal immediately. These shocks include not only Vietnam, two energy crises and the entry of the baby-boom generation into the labor force, but also the Reagan policies, which have created enormous deficits that pose a continuing threat to any recovery.

"Suppose you are a doctor who is taking over a patient who is at death's door," one senior aide told *In These Times*. "You can't use the same treatments that you might use on a healthy patient."

Mondale regards the economy he would like to inherit in 1985 as a patient at death's door. Mondale sees his first term as a period of improvement and convalescence rather than total cure. "With sensible policies through the '80s, and with no new shocks, we could create a better employment experience than we've had," the aide said. In the 1990s, it may be assumed, the conditions will have been created for a return to neo-Keynesian full employment policies.

These underlying premises yield a modest and, in some respects, peculiar fiscal and monetary program. According to neo-Keynesian orthodoxy, tax cuts, increases in spending and budget deficits were to be used to create demand, investment and jobs. But Mondale assumes that budget deficits, by causing interest rates to rise, have become the principal cause rather than the cure of unemployment and flagging investment.

Mondale's fiscal and monetary policies, unveiled last January, were therefore directed at reducing the budget deficit by cutting spending and raising taxes. Mondale's proposals projected about \$60 billion in tax increases from 1985 to 1989, mostly at the expense of corporations and the wealthy, and about \$60 billion in budget cuts, mostly out of the military budget.

Mondale also called for an accord between the government and the Federal Reserve to prevent interest rates from rising sharply and another accord between the U.S. and its advanced capitalist allies to prevent currency exchange rates from fluctuating wildly at the expense of the dollar. To dampen whatever inflationary impulses might arise from a less restrictive monetary policy, Mondale proposed limiting hospital, energy and food costs through specific measures.

Most political analysts commented on the degree to which Mondale's budget reductions—about \$100 billion over four years—would barely nick the \$200 billion and up annual deficits that have been projected for the next five years. Mondale's proposals were not a serious assault on the deficit, but neither were they a reiteration of liberal Democratic policy. Their logic recalled Herbert Hoover, who raised taxes and cut spending in the face of the Great Depression, rather than Franklin Roosevelt and his successors. And their details contained few legacies from the Democratic past.

There was not even a major jobs program. And the traditional Democratic proposal for national health insurance, first introduced by Harry Truman, was deferred in favor of hospital cost containment, a dubious Carter administration proposal that, according to medical sociologist Paul Starr, "could turn out to be primarily a test of the ingenuity of hospitals and their accountants."

The best that can be said of Mondale's proposals is that they would be less militaristic and more equitable than those that the Reagan administration is expected to present in its second term. But there is little basis for believing that the Mondale proposals would create a "better employment experience" in the '80s.

First, the Mondale numbers are too small to affect the current economic logic. If deficits are the cause of high in-

terest rates, then \$100 billion lopped off of \$800 billion in projected deficits will not make a great deal of difference.

Second, the Mondale logic is itself suspect, as was Hoover's. If Mondale's budget cuts and tax increases were large enough to make a difference, then their negative effect on consumer demand, jobs and investment would presumably cancel their positive effect on interest rates, the dollar and the balance of trade.

Economist Gar Alperovitz, who has advised the Mondale campaign, doesn't believe that the Mondale program is "serious." Alperovitz notes that most economists expect a sharp downturn in 1985 or early 1986. In the face of such a downturn, a Democrat committed to any semblance of full employment would have to be prepared to offer a massive jobs program and would have to take a "hard line" on the Federal Reserve.

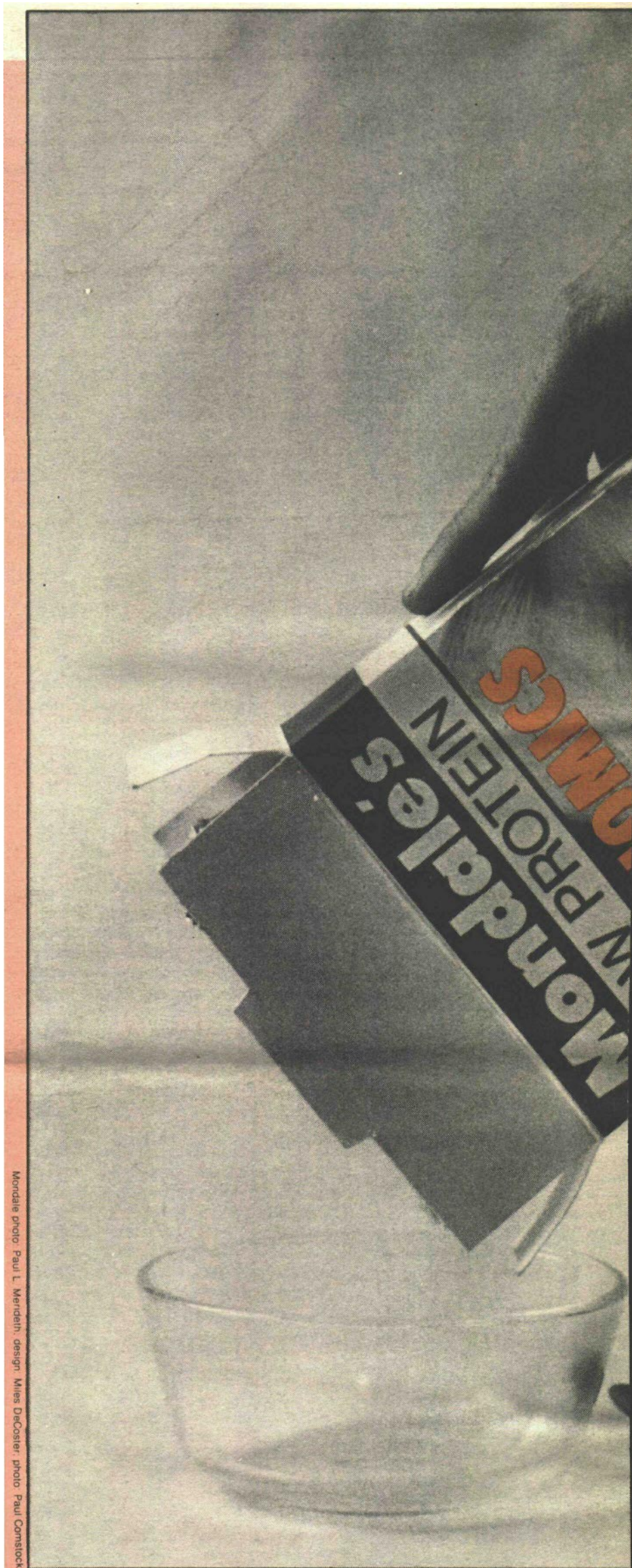
Mondale's fiscal proposals can be chalked up partly to Mondale's legendary cautiousness and to the politics of a presi-

dential campaign. If he was serious about cutting the deficit, he would have to offer spending cuts and tax increases that would offend important Democratic constituencies. But Mondale's proposals also represent a failure of Democratic economists and politicians to adapt their programs to the changes that have taken place in American and world capitalism in the last two decades.

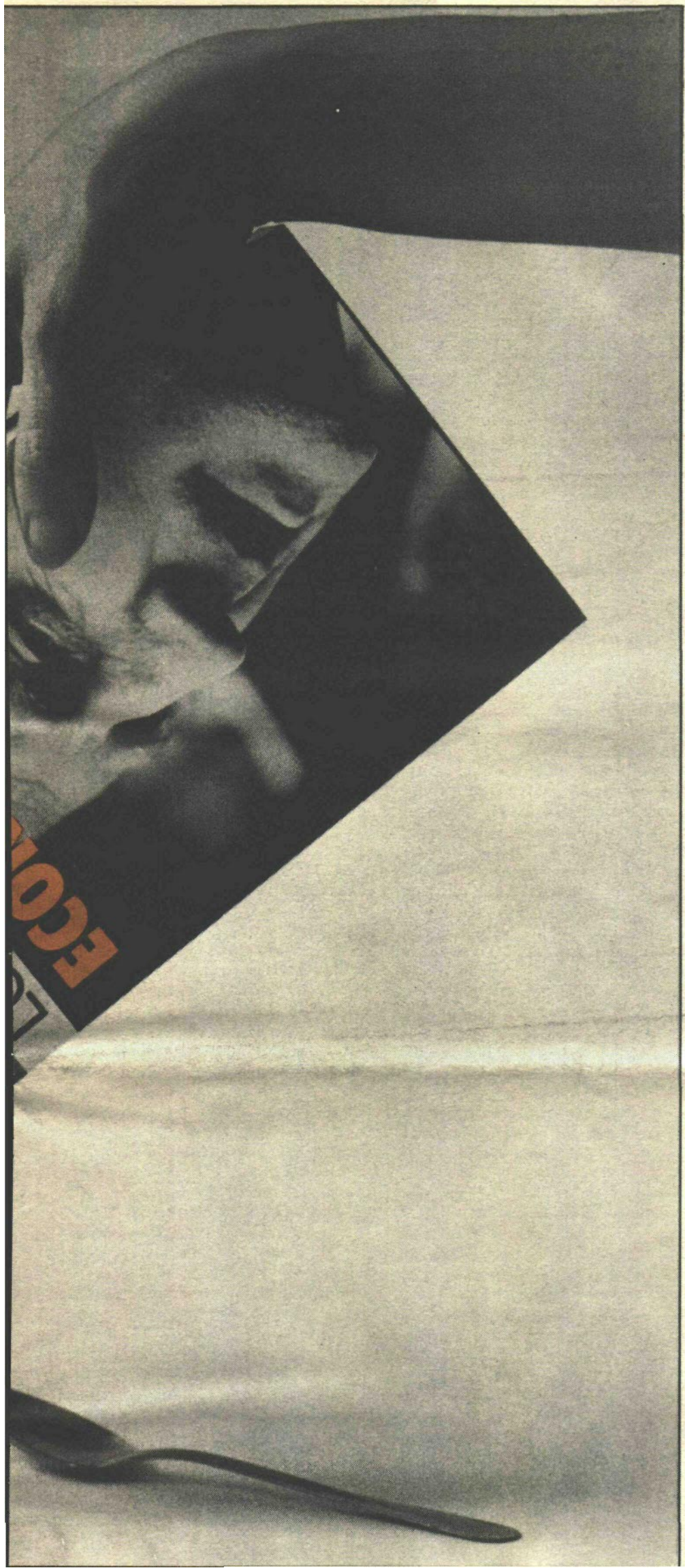
His programs are based on the assumption that if the U.S. can ride out the shocks of the '70s and early '80s, it will find itself again the green pastures of full employment and low inflation. But stop-gap programs will not arrest the downward trajectory of the American economy, which has been the result of worldwide overcapacity, capital flight and the threat to industrial jobs posed by automation.

The Chrysler model.

Mondale's program for individual industries—his industrial policy—reflects his



Mondale photo: Paul L. Merdian; design: Miles DeCoster; photo: Paul Cornstock



tive at the expense of workers' jobs. Mondale's industrial policy may be necessary for making American firms more competitive, but it cannot be seen as part of a strategy for restoring full employment. On the contrary, it is a strategy that will reduce employment.

Mondale's trade policies may initially protect American manufacturers from underpriced foreign goods and make it possible for American high-technology firms to break into protected foreign markets. But purely protectionist measures—like the orderly marketing agreements and steel trigger pricing initiated by the Carter administration—can also delay rather than accelerate industrial modernization. Mondale claims that he will not repeat the error of Carter's trigger pricing—he will demand that firms benefiting from trade production use their profits to modernize rather than diversify—but his 12-point "Comprehensive Plan for Steel" that he handed out in Pennsylvania contained no provisions requiring the steel companies to use their profits productively.

The only Mondale program that will clearly increase employment is the United Auto Workers' Domestic Content bill, which requires high-volume foreign auto manufacturers to build their cars in the U.S. This proposal would not eliminate competition—Japanese firms would simply have to use American workers. It could mean an initial increase in automobile prices, but these higher prices would easily be offset by the salutary effect that increased domestic automobile production would have on the entire economy.

Unfortunately, of all of Mondale's proposals, the domestic content bill is the one that he is least likely to press—he has barely mentioned it in his campaign except during the Michigan primary—and the one that Congress is least likely to accept. It has passed the Democratic House only because most Democrats assumed that it would never pass the Senate. And it is bitterly opposed by corporate Democrats. Indeed, Washington is rife with rumors that Mondale has already privately assured these Democrats that if elected he will not push the bill.

If Mondale is taken at his word, his proposals would have roughly this effect: his industrial policy, modeled on the Chrysler bailout, would increase the competitiveness of American manufacturers, but would reduce the overall workforce. His fiscal and monetary policies (if applied seriously) would also make American goods more competitive by keeping interest rates and the dollar down, but they would depress domestic demand and possibly employment.

Taken together, his macro- and micro-economic policies would lead to increased exports and higher profits for American corporations (and farmers), but probably also to fewer jobs and lower wages at home (as unemployment and declining skill requirements depress wages). As the decline in jobs and demand continued, it would threaten corporate profits and discourage investment.

His aggressive trade policies would initially aid American firms, but as other countries began to retaliate, American opportunities—and the world market itself—could be expected to diminish, as occurred in the late '20s. As both foreign and domestic demand declined, the U.S. could find itself on the edge of a new depression.

Of course, Mondale would alter his policies in the face of growing unemployment. The point is not that Mondale, if elected, would cause a depression, but that Mondale's current proposals, which promise to "employ all Americans who want a job in this country," would have precisely the opposite effect. They are no more worthy of respect than Reagan's 1980 proposals were.

In Mondale's contest with Hart for the Democratic nomination, two ironies are apparent after a close examination of Mondale's proposals. He rested his campaign in Illinois, New York and Pennsylvania on his support for and Hart's opposition to the Chrysler bailout. In Pennsylvania, Mondale claimed that the bail-

out saved 600,000 jobs—an estimate that defies the most errant calculator. But by presenting Chrysler as his model for industrial policy, Mondale was in fact offering Democratic voters an alternative that would eventually lead to fewer rather than more jobs.

Mondale's other weapon against Hart has been the Wendy's anti-McDonald's slogan, "Where's the beef?" But Hart's economic proposals—whatever their individual merits—are far more carefully worked out than Mondale's (see *In These Times*, March 21). The only detailed program that Mondale has presented is his proposal for hospital cost containment, which he is simply recycling from the Carter administration. Besides having no jobs program, nor any program for infrastructure repair, Mondale also has no specific proposal for retraining displaced workers like those 40,000 former Chrysler workers. Nor does he have any program except "jawboning" for preventing the diversion of corporate profits to speculation and mergers. If Hart's burger contains little beef, Mondale's is entirely composed of gristle.

He is running on precisely the kind of economic platform that caused the Carter administration to be ousted from office in 1980. Most of his proposals and economic advisors derive from those dismal four years. (See story below.) Mondale only appears to be the "liberal" or "labor" candidate because he is being judged against Hart's neo-liberalism and Reagan's free-market economics, and because the AFL-CIO, reeling from Reaganomics and fearful of John Glenn's candidacy, cast all its eggs in his frayed basket. ■

Mondale looks to Carter leftovers for policy advice

One way to anticipate what a presidential candidate would do if elected is to examine his advisors. Mondale has talked to many people about economic policy, but those upon whom he most relies are drawn largely from the Carter administration. They include former Office of Management and Budget officials Bowman Cutter (budgetary issues) and Elliot Cutler (energy), former Carter domestic issues advisor Stuart Eizenstat (industrial policy), former Treasury Secretaries Michael Blumenthal and William Miller (monetary policy), former State Department official Fred Bergstein (international economics) and Special Trade Representative Alan Woolf.

The non-Carterites include AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland, Brookings Institution economist George Perry (macroeconomic policy), and Robert Reich and Ira Magaziner. Reich and Magaziner co-authored *Minding America's Business* and Reich recently published *The Next American Frontier*, a book on industrial policy that Mondale reportedly read at one sitting. Reich and Magaziner are innovative economists who are equally at home calling for Japanese-style government intervention and worker self-management, but it is doubtful whether, in a Mondale administration, their influence would counteract the dead hand of the Carterites.

—J.B.J.

underestimation of the economy's structural problems. Mondale's model of industrial decline and renewal is the Chrysler Corporation. He sees American industry as Chrysler writ large: its woes are the result of unfair trade practice by foreign competitors and of shortsighted management decisions that sacrificed long-term production for immediate profits; its remedies lie in protectionism and government subsidies.

Mondale's industrial policy would be carried out by a "Council on Economic Competitiveness," whose membership would be drawn from government, management and labor. The Council would extract concessions from both management and labor in exchange for loans and trade relief. During the Pennsylvania primary, Mondale promised steelworkers and executives that he would make the steel industry's reorganization along the lines of the Chrysler bailout his new Council's "first priority."

But the Chrysler model of "reindus-

trialization" has certain drawbacks. While the bailout prevented a bankruptcy—which would have threatened Chrysler's financial creditors—and allowed Chrysler to restore its competitiveness, it did not save most of Chrysler's jobs. Not only did Chrysler workers make sizable wage concessions, but they also lost thousands of jobs. In 1978, Chrysler employed 96,900 production workers. In 1984, a recovery year, it is employing 56,500 workers. Twenty Chrysler plants have closed, 16 of them in the Detroit area. Black employment in Chrysler has declined 38 percent. Overall capacity has only slightly declined. Chrysler sold 1.6 million cars in the U.S. in 1978. In 1984, it is expected to sell 1.45 million.

The Chrysler experience illustrates the paradox of Mondale's industrial policy. Because the principal means companies use to reduce costs is to automate and because worldwide overcapacity in basic industry limits demand, industries like auto and steel will only become more competi-

LETTERS

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MISSING POINTS

AS A MEMBER OF THE CITIZENS PARTY, I'm dismayed that so many presumably progressive political analysts are able to keep missing their own points. The latest example to appear in these pages is John Judis' piece on the Democrats' presidential nominating process (ITT, April 11).

Deep in this salad of fact and opinion, while comparing our "representative" form of government with European parliamentary systems, Judis states: "In the U.S.,...[third parties are] the least effective way of gaining political power." But in the penultimate paragraph, he offers this: "The solutions to this country's deepest problems have most often come from the periphery rather than the established center...." Precisely. That's why I am where I am.

Political power isn't necessarily the winning of elections (although Citizens Party candidates have done that too); primarily, it's having your agenda discussed and debated, and eventually adopted by the mainstream.

—Robert Lee Hefter
Wanamassa, N.J.

SABOTAGE

JOHN B. JUDIS' DISCUSSION OF THE Democratic campaign selection process and the need for reforms (ITT, April 11) was timely, but somewhat off the mark in analysis.

Walter Mondale's home state employs both the caucus-convention system and primary elections to select candidates. The caucus-convention system

is the more democratic. It is not, as Judis implies, a system by which party bosses make the decisions. The primary is a method by which Republicans are permitted to cross over and frustrate the democratic decisions arrived at by Democratic Farmer Labor Party supporters. In recent years the Republicans have succeeded in nominating in the DFL primary a candidate for governor who had been rejected by the caucus-convention process, and who turned out to be a dreadful reactionary whose major accomplishment was an all-out war on credit unions. They also, by primary vote, defeated the DFL-chosen candidate for U.S. Senate, resulting in the election of another utter reactionary. Apparently this cross-over technique is being employed effectively in this campaign in states where it is permitted.

The fact that Eugene McCarthy had a big hand in initiating the post-1968 "reforms" makes those reforms at least suspect. McCarthy's motives have always been open to question. He organized the sabotage of the 1968 Democratic Convention, inflicting damage that the nominee, Hubert Humphrey, was unable to mend completely in the campaign time left, resulting in the election of Nixon. (McCarthy had ridden into Congress on Humphrey's coat-tails, had been a do-nothing congressman and then had developed the ridiculous notion that he was of presidential stature.) McCarthy also supported and endorsed Reagan in 1980. So much for his Democratic and peace-loving proclivities.

—Fredrick S. Gram
St. Paul, Minn.

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



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ENLIGHTENED?

I'D PREFER NOT TO GET BETWEEN John Judis and the Institute for Policy Studies in their argument about Nicaragua (ITT, April 11), but one thing that Robert Borosage wrote deserves comment. Borosage refers to an archbishop as a "reactionary," but the only reasons he gives for this judgment are that this archbishop counsels Catholics to refuse the draft and questions the "very legitimacy of the state."

The archbishop may hold other positions that qualify him as a reactionary, but these two positions are surely enlightened and progressive.

—Sheldon L. Richman
Springfield, Va.

EPIC

IN REGARD TO H. MORTON NEWMAN'S letter (ITT, March 28), no commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Upton Sinclair's EPIC (End Poverty in California) campaign for governor of California should fail to mention the widely circulated MGM redbaiting "newsreel" that helped demolish Sinclair at the polls, as it ended fears that an EPIC victory could lead to heavier taxes for the studios!

The film zeroed in on a dirty old man with a heavy foreign accent, "Russian whiskers" and a menacing look in his eye—the full '30s Hollywood caricature of a radical. He is telling an "inquiring reporter" that he is "voting for Seemclair...because if his system worked so well in Russia, why wouldn't it work here?" This was contrasted with a shot of a demure elderly woman rocking away on her front porch as she explains that she is voting for Gov. Merriam, the Republican incumbent, "because I want to have my little home. It's all I have left in the world." Fadeout poor Upton Sinclair!

—David Platt
Long Beach, N.Y.

MISSING

I FIND ELLEN CANTAROW'S INTERVIEW (ITT, March 14) under the heading "Testimony" disturbing. One reason I have enjoyed reading *In These Times* coverage on the Mideast has been its even-handed reporting on the subject. It had not resorted to the kind of anti-Israeli/pro-Arab propaganda that is so prevalent in much of the left press. While it is easy to criticize Israel, and Lord knows the Begin-Shamir-Sharon leadership deserves most of the criticism it receives, I am disturbed when equal criticism is not heaped on the brutal Arab regimes that are the cause of Israeli militarism.

Cantarow points out that the residents of the Shuf are determined "finally to get rest, independence and some measure of justice against the Phalange, Israel and their American patrons." One party is sadly missing from that litany of bad guys. The Syrians. Let us

not forget that the "Arab brother" Assad killed more Palestinians in his ruthless attacks on the PLO than Israel ever has. Let us not forget Assad's acts in Hama. Let us not forget Iran and Iraq and their bloody battle. To write a condemnatory story based on anecdotes reminds me of Ronald Reagan and his press conferences.

—Alan Gordon
Atlanta

HOW'S THAT?

YOUR ARTICLE ABOUT ELDRIDGE Cleaver seeking the U.S. House seat of Ron Dellums (ITT, Feb. 22) in California was excellent.

However, I was disappointed that you did not list the address to which we could mail contributions for Cleaver's campaign. He is pursuing a most noteworthy objective.

—George K. Ford
Longview, Texas

KEY OBJECTIVES

IF ONLY THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT'S Advanced Research Projects Agency could get its supercomputers "to perform [in war] like an intelligent human being...." (S.K. Levin on computers, ITT, April 4).

Better yet: if the wizards at DARPA would perform like intelligent human beings and keep us out of war.

—Bill Wohlhueter
Springville, N.Y.

CONTEXT

MAURICE ISSERMAN, REVIEWING Harvey Klehr's *The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade* (ITT, April 4), agrees that the American Communist Party's politics in the '30s were knee-jerk responses to decisions made in Moscow. But for Isserman this "is not the most interesting part of the story." He criticizes the book for failing to explain "the remarkable expansion of [the Party's] membership in the latter half" of the '30s.

But Isserman draws too sharp a contrast between the CP in the early and the late '30s. He describes it as having "stagnated in the early '30s under the burden of the ultra-sectarianism imposed on it by the Comintern." Yet he overlooks the unemployed movement the Communists led. And also the mass support for unemployment and social insurance that the CP stimulated and that helped enact the 1935 Social Security Act. In the early '30s the CP also made the frame-up of the Scottsboro boys a world issue, which saved their lives.

It's time that Marxist historians freed themselves from stereotypes with sinister overtones about the relations between the American CP and the Soviet Union. There is much to criticize about the subordination of all the Communist parties in capitalist countries to the Soviet-dominated Comintern. But this has to be put into historic context. Even before the Bolshevik triumph, Lenin and others had projected the need for a new international to replace the Second International, which had collapsed as a result of the support by most of its leaders of their own governments in World War I. It was inevitable that newborn Communist parties, when they gathered in Moscow in 1919 to form the new international, would regard the Soviet party as its natural leader.

It's now clear that the guidance of Comintern leaders was based on a skewed assessment of reality. And the prolonged tutelage of the American party was inherently harmful. But it's a mistake to regard the Comintern as nothing more than an instrument of Soviet policy. Its leaders sought to advance what they considered the interests of the working class and its allies in the U.S., interests they regarded as never being in conflict with the state interests of the USSR.

—A.B. Magill
New York

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By John Dinges

PERSPECTIVES

THE OVERTHROW OF A HONDURAN military strongman has cast a shadow of uncertainty over the Reagan administration's reported plans to escalate U.S. involvement in Central America.

U.S. officials in Washington and Honduras have insisted that the March 31 ouster by fellow officers of Gen. Gustavo Alvarez, the commander of the Honduran armed forces, was the result of internal rifts over military promotion schedules and corruption and would not change the Honduran role as the Reagan administration's military staging area in Central America's increasingly bellicose climate.

Those optimistic statements may be whistling in the dark.

Judging from the history of the Honduran officer corps and past disputes involving the Alvarez camp, the military commander's ouster is likely to mean stiff Honduran resistance to new U.S. efforts to move from the present series of exercises to actual combat.

Congressional critics of administration policy have charged that military exercises involving thousands of U.S. troops—and air fields for troop transports—are creating a semipermanent presence in Honduras to lay the groundwork for a possible U.S. invasion of Nicaragua or direct intervention in El Salvador.

The *New York Times* reported April 5 that the Reagan administration has made the political decision that it will use U.S. units in combat in Central America if leftist forces cannot be defeated by other means. A few days later, the *Washington Post* wrote that the administration is carrying out a "holding action," including such tactics as the mining of Nicaraguan ports, until the U.S. presidential election. If Reagan wins the election, the *Post* reported, he plans an "all-out" effort to defeat leftist forces and to regain U.S. control in the region.

A carefully worded denial of the reports from the Pentagon and the White House said there were no plans to invade Nicaragua using U.S. troops.

In the context of these reports of future escalation the military shakeup in Honduras assumes crucial importance. If the U.S. indeed had decided to go for broke toward a military victory against Nicaragua and the Salvadoran rebels, the plans would necessarily have revolved around Gen. Alvarez, the man who singlehandedly made the U.S. presence in Honduras possible. His absence may force the planners back to the drawing board.

In early 1982, Honduras installed a democratically elected president, Roberto Suazo Cordova, ending a decade of mild military dictatorship. It was soon clear, however, that the Honduran armed forces remained dominant behind the scenes, maintaining control of foreign policy and all security matters through an extra-constitutional body, the Council of National Security, half of whose members were top military officers.

In May of 1982, then-Col. Alvarez became commander of the armed forces, promoted himself to general and dismissed his two top rivals in what had until then been a collegially run officers corps. With the support of the remaining five top officers, Alvarez took control and arranged a heavy U.S. military presence in Honduras and intense direct involvement with CIA-sponsored guerrilla forces attacking Nicaragua's Sandinista government. Even more irritating to Honduran nationalist sentiments, Alvarez advocated military cooperation with El Salvador, with whom Honduras went to war in 1969 in a border dispute. Last year, when congressional wariness prevented the stationing of additional army trainers in El Salvador, Alvarez allowed the U.S. to create a military facility to train hundreds of Salvadoran troops on Honduran territory.

Alvarez' policies met with strong, but ineffectual resistance from military, government and opposition political sectors. One of the officers pushed aside by Alvarez in 1982 made a series of spectacular criticisms of Alvarez from exile in Mexico. The officer, Col. Leonidas Torres Arias,

Alvarez' predecessor as head of the Honduran security police, accused Alvarez of human rights brutality and of "leading Honduras into an abyss of internal destruction, preparing the people for the possibilities of a war."

"His extremist, radical and repressive ideas will only lead the people of Honduras along the road of fratricidal struggle as well as toward costly and irreparable international confrontations that will bring death, pain, destruction and mourning to the noble Honduran nation," Torres Arias said in an August 1982 statement.

Torres Arias has avoided public statements about the current Honduran military crisis. The other officer removed along with Torres Arias, Col. Hubert Boden, who was relegated to the Honduran embassy in Taiwan, has been recalled to Honduras following the shakeup, according to a report in the British newspaper, *The Guardian*.

The removal of Alvarez seems to have reversed the effect of the 1982 purge: four of the five officers who remained after that shakeup have now been deposed along with Alvarez. The fifth, Gen. Walter Lopez, the head of the Honduran Air Force, led the move to capture Alvarez, hold him overnight and unceremoniously fly him handcuffed into exile. Lopez acted after Alvarez announced a change in military procedures that would have meant Lopez' own ouster.

Alvarez' militant postures on the Central American conflicts also have led to clashes with civilians, whose position both inside the government and in the opposition seems to have been emboldened by his ouster. In September 1982, President Suazo Cordova and Foreign Minister Edgardo Paz Barnica launched a major diplomatic initiative to bring about a regionally negotiated settlement with Nicaragua. Alvarez quickly made public statements opposing soft-line treatment of Nicaragua and asserting that Honduras was in a "war to the death" with its neighbor. His opposition effectively doomed the initiative, which Paz Barnica had promoted vigorously with visits to Europe and the U.S.

After Alvarez' removal, Paz Barnica said conditions for a "peace policy at a regional level" had been improved. Last week in Tegucigalpa, Lopez confirmed this, saying, "The armed forces are disposed to back up all the actions taken by the constitutional government of Honduras in the aim of finding a peaceful negotiated solution to the conflicts in Central America." He said the armed forces would give "unconditional back-

ing" to the efforts of the four-nation Contadora group.

A few days after the shakeup, about 5,000 Hondurans marched in the capital city of Tegucigalpa, and called for the withdrawal of "foreign military forces that have occupied our country." Until now, the U.S. embassy spokesmen have made a special point of informing visiting newsmen that there has been no significant public opposition to the U.S. maneuvers in Honduras.

Hondurans, unlike official American spokesmen, have linked Alvarez' ouster to his advocacy of preparations for war. The officers who removed Alvarez certainly

had knowledge of any U.S. plans to make the step from exercises to combat. If the U.S. decision to go to war had been made, as the *New York Times* reported, it is difficult to believe that the Honduran officer corps would have removed their top commander and architect of the war preparations over such relatively trivial matters as corruption and promotion schedules.

The Honduran officers' actions make solid sense, however, if their intention is to put on the brakes to stop Alvarez from leading the country into war on behalf of the United States.

John Dinges has reported extensively on Latin America for many publications.



The ouster of Gen. Gustavo Alvarez in Honduras on March 31 has improved the prospects for peace in Central America, says former foreign minister.

Alvarez exit hinders Reagan

Robert Coles on NICARAGUA

Arturo Cruz, who resigned as Nicaragua's Ambassador to the U.S., wrote in *Foreign Affairs* that the Sandinista Revolution's "rank and file" is made up of "idealistic boys and girls."

Recently I went with two of my sons to Nicaragua. Idealism seemed very much in evidence. The literacy program has been dramatically effective; among those who helped in that effort were upper and middle class youth in Managua who attended a Roman Catholic school. The school's principal, Edwin Maradiaga, a native-born priest, was eloquent in his description of what has taken place: "For our students this was the opportunity of their lives. They had lived in a protected world of their own. Under Somoza, half the country had an income of less than \$100 a year. The Somoza family alone owned a quarter of all our arable land. They and a handful of cronies had total power and huge wealth, while 80 percent of the people had no water, and two thirds of them no electricity, and half no sanitary facilities at all, and nearly three quarters lived in houses with dirt floors. Over 100 of every 1,000 children born died as infants."

"Our students have learned these statistics. Once they didn't know them, because — to be frank — we didn't teach them. We didn't know them ourselves! Many of our students have never

forgotten the experience of going into the barrios, and teaching children their own age how to read and write. One of our boys asked why he'd never been told about how his own people live. I think many of us have been shaking our heads about the past and trying to work for a better future. I wish someone would tell your people how many of our young people from very comfortable families have been given a real jolt of idealism by this Revolution."

But he is a reflective priest, by no means willing to allow the above observations to take complete control of his mind. He is in a terrible bind. He knows there are tough ideologues hard at work among the Sandinistas — anxious to give short shrift to the desire many have for a social democratic outcome. The Sandinistas have curbed dissent, and shown little sensitivity to the people's religious yearnings or the truly revolutionary possibilities a Christian spirit offers.

But: "For over four decades we lived with fear and bitterness every day here, and we knew that the outside world, by and large, didn't care much that we were a country enslaved," he pointed out to us, to my sons especially, who kept wondering how it was that a country they love — our country — could be so indifferent for so long to the ordeal of Nicaragua under Somoza — and now be so vigorously sensitive to the mistakes and wrongdoings of the Sandinistas.

Extracted from the April 1984 NEW OXFORD REVIEW

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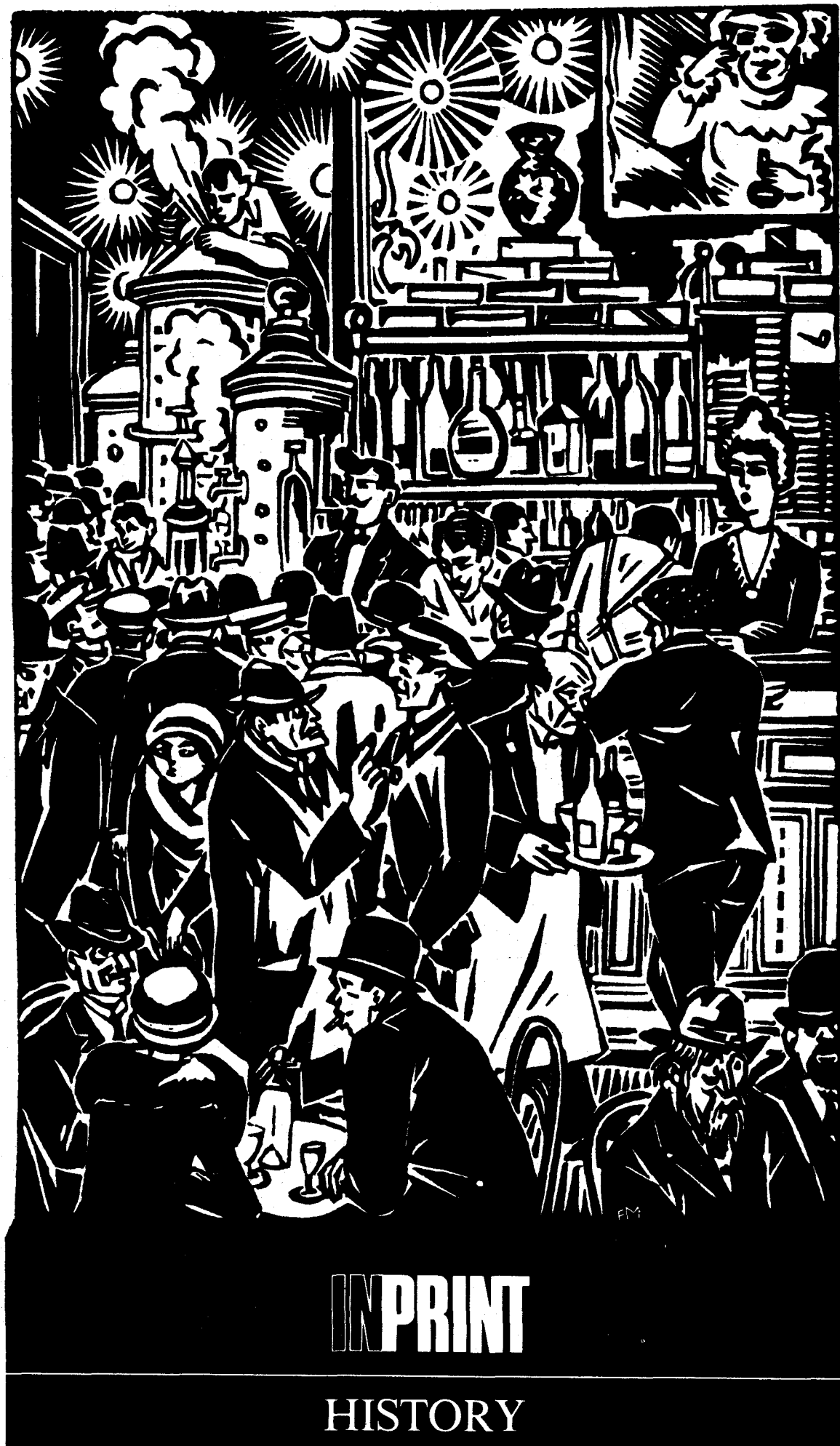
By Paul Buhle

Back in 1910, a distinguished radical journalist wrote the first real social history of an American union: *The Brewing Industry and the Brewery Workers' Movement in America*. Herman Schluter, who corresponded with Karl Marx and presided over pages of the socialist daily *New Yorker Volkszeitung* before English-language socialists got a foothold in the U.S., chose a natural subject. The United Brewery Workers' industrial unionism proved what socialist leadership could do, and the *Volkszeitung* paid its bills for years by doubling as official organ of the union.

The relation of beer to socialism had been fundamental from the beginnings of the ethnic radical movement. German-American Socialists won over their neighbors and co-workers by sponsoring huge beer-guzzling picnics on Sundays out in the countryside, safe from the blue laws. Excluded from most other public meeting places after the violent strikes of 1877, union locals of all kinds found room in friendly taverns for their events, and not only because of the saloon owners' personal sympathies. Those class-conscious workers went through barrels of the foamy stuff.

On the other hand, most native-born Americans, even those at the leftward edges of reform, found the kinship of beer and radicalism unsettling. The whole dream of a workers', farmers' and women's alliance against monopoly may have collapsed when the Women's Christian Temperance Union's radical president, Frances Willard, failed to negotiate a temperance and women's suffrage plank in the Populist platform. Conservatives liked to imagine conspiracies by foreign-born agitators behind the swinging doors.

All this shows how little Americans understood the changes transforming the cities in the late 19th and early 20th century, and how much they tended to fear what they could not understand. The rise of industry and the massive "new" immigration (from eastern and southern Europe) created neighborhoods overnight and squeezed together the human resources for new politics, new mass entertainments, new foods and new drinks, like the lager beer that rapidly displaced British-style ale. Although the old elites sponsored the industrial development and skimmed off the profits, they still



INPRINT

HISTORY

Urban ethnics and the swinging doors

couldn't effectively control the bewildering diversity of ethnic social life.

In anxiety, fascination and pursuit of careers, scholars and journalists began in the 1910s to examine these immigrant cultures. The process has continued unabated until today, and the books pile high on library shelves. Until very recently, however, only a few of the studies actually penetrated the lives of the urban ghetto inhabitants.

Part of the problem can be attributed to sources. Americans have been notoriously unwilling to learn any non-English language. Borrowing from the often superficial or misinformed observations of newspaper sensationalists, government investigators and reformers, or spinning out theories of corruption or social control has been much easier than discovering the immigrants'

own self-perceptions. Behind the investigative laziness lies a long-standing prejudice that a faceless mass of immigrants, ignorant and bound for assimilation anyway, did not seem to have a culture worth investigating.

But recently historians like David Montgomery and Herbert Gutman have avidly promoted the study of factory and community life, especially during the years when various communities settled into new patterns. Archivists like Rudolph Vecoli (of the Immigration History Research Center in St. Paul-Minneapolis) have collected important ethnic newspapers and organizational records before they slip into oblivion. And a few third-generation immigrants, like Michael Karni with his colorful *Finnish-Americana* magazine, have begun to promote the renewal of the radical culture of their grandpar-

ents. Slowly, and unevenly, a new picture comes into focus.

One "discovery"—long obvious to immigrants and their descendants but not to scholars—is that ethnic neighborhoods provide a rich, stable environment for generations of inhabitants. Like other Americans fascinated by the rat-race, historians and sociologists have not seen past the excitement of mobility to this truth.

Stability vs. change.

But as Oliver Zunz shows in *The Changing Face of Inequality*, stability and change do not cancel each other out—at least not in the short run. The emergence of heavy industry might pull a German, Polish or Ukrainian worker from a neighborhood bakery or brewery without necessarily diminishing the character of the home district. Jobs meant

prosperity for neighborhood small business and fraternal societies and a sense of common identification with unions often uplifted the collective body and spirit.

For Zunz, however, ethnic solidarity seems to undermine the emerging class-consciousness of those varied workers who met on the shop floor. Many examples could be given of employers playing one ethnic group against another. But in every labor or progressive movement from these neighborhoods, ethnicity reinforced class and created the institutions that gave social causes their human sustenance.

Another revelation to the scholarly world is that immigrants or internal migrants like blacks have a distinct consciousness. Not long ago, mainstream historians accepted the idea that immigrants swallowed American individualism whole. Reagan think-tankers like Thomas Sowell have sought to revive the myth by attributing the culture of poverty to minorities' inscrutable unwillingness to accept capitalist ideals.

Books like *Lives of Their Own* document the solidity and tenaciousness of ethnic values related to family, work and home ownership. The complexity of the results defies summary, and interpretation is not the authors' strong point. From oral history and other primary sources they use so deftly, we do know that the varied groups arrived, struggled and survived collectively into the second or third generation, ruminating all the while on their opportunities and their fate. Though they did not find the streets paved with gold, they learned to live with miserably-paid, dangerous, demeaning jobs and a mainstream culture that called them nigger, dago or hunky.

Under these conditions, why weren't more of them socialists? Even today, most studies seem to sanitize the evidence. The struggle for unions and the confrontations with police and employers provided major themes for collective lore in Detroit, Pittsburgh, Gary and other major industrial centers. Out of those struggles came a radical cadre rooted more or less firmly in the ethnic neighborhoods, frequently denounced in church or synagogue but also generally recognized as a community resource in times of trouble.

Of course, they played a key role in the unions. And their "foreign" language newspapers, especially among groups like Jews, Finns, Hungarians, Lithuanians and South Slavs, had large circulations that reached far outside radical circles. For longer or shorter periods, they could accurately claim to represent the community's true sentiments against clerics who opposed unionism and supported monarchy (later, fascism), or against ethnic business allies who gladly served as middlemen for exploitative landlords and industrialists.

Even in crisis situations like depression, class conflict and world war, the majority of inhabitants held back from actual membership in radical movements. They had too much to lose in threats to their jobs and too little to gain in a country far from revolutionary transforma-

tion. But they frequently attended or joined the radical fraternal gatherings, theater, chorus and sports events that supported ethnic culture.

After the decline of the political movements, cultural remnants survived for decades and in some cases still do. Consumer co-ops, fish fries and musical events in the surviving fraternal halls, as well as group tours to the Old Country, maintain the communal spirit. Ironically, like the radicals' old competitors, religious institutions, they have preserved ethnic identity.

Historians have not gone very far yet in utilizing the rich evidence in newspapers, archives and narratives of the surviving veterans of vanished movements. But *German Workers in Industrial Chicago* has made a start. Eleven young scholars have portrayed life from top to bottom, from kitchen to neighborhood, from handicraft factory to giant industrial plant. Radicals play a prominent part. Pioneer "48er" political refugees, dedicated unionists, anarchist hotheads, *Lehr and Wehr* armed marching societies, ideologues and functionaries all engaged in the life of ordinary people around them. The radicals never reached their goals, but *German Workers* shows that the left exerted a critical leverage.

If socialism had established itself as a viable movement, radicals would still be seen as controversial militants proclaiming their ultimate goals without fear. This brings us back, oddly, to beer—that symbol of vanished

ethnic neighborhoods and the ghost armies of socialist industrial unionism. What happened to that world? A narrow monograph of urban politics and the liquor industry, *The Saloon* tells little about it. But author Perry Duis hints at something bigger in his portrayal of the retail beer market's vast expansion, the power of the neighborhood merchant who delivered the goods, and the WASP gentry's characteristic controlling reaction.

No immediate revolution.

We have now grown older and wiser in an age of demoralized unions and unprecedentedly bad, unbeer-like beer. It would be too easy to side with historic neighborhood prejudices against the good-government coalition of lawyers, real estate agents, liberals and WASP socialists who sponsored saloon regulation at the turn of the century, supported the spread of settlement houses and set the precedent for future welfare-delivery systems.

The "evils" reformers lashed out against were palpably real: alcoholism, family impoverishment and abuse, and rampant crime in sprawling red-light districts. The hopes invested in Prohibition offered the moral equivalent of Bolshevik fantasies for immediate revolution. Both presumed to cure society in a single stroke, without first creating the cultural basis for a different kind of social order. The melancholy outcome saw booze take on a new mystique, organized crime gain a sanctioned source of power, the beer industry become



monopolized and socialist unionism go down in defeat.

The ethnic communities never had the chance to elaborate their most radical and creative idea: a multi-cultural, even multi-linguistic American democracy where all groups could draw upon a common pool of contributions without diminishing the beauty of any part. But native-born socialists who thought of immigrants as "amateur Americans," unionists and parliamentarians who failed to think beyond their

narrow strategies, and Bolsheviks and social democrats never made the most of their greatest potential strengths.

Faced with the overwhelming power of American capital, disoriented by continual culture shock, they accepted the economic assumptions of American liberalism and European Marxism against their own best judgment. Without that vision, class and ethnic resentments had a way of turning inward. Add the disintegrating effects of chain

stores, highways and crime on the old neighborhoods and you get Archie's Bunkerism. America promised that more production would somehow solve all problems. Now blue-collar Reaganites and right-leaning children of CIO unionists continue to vote for their prerogative to swill Old Milwaukee and curse their supposedly unproductive inferiors.

But the story isn't over yet. At the present rate of new immigration, the U.S. population will be more than 50 percent Latin American in another century. The struggle over this constituency may well decide the future of American socialism. In the shorter run, left-leaning priests set down roots in the emerging communities, "Spanglish" cultural magazines from Texas to Washington discover new writers and a new political vernacular, and Norman Lear has returned to television with his new series, *a.k.a. Pablo*.

Like turn-of-the-century ethnic activists, community progressives today face opposition that promises power and assimilation to the successful. We had better learn from history that every part of the radical movement has the responsibility to help work out economic, social and cultural alternatives for a more democratic American order. Meanwhile, pour me a Dos Equis and we'll talk about it. ■

Paul Buhle, the director of Oral History of the American Left at the Tamiment Institute, brews his own beer.

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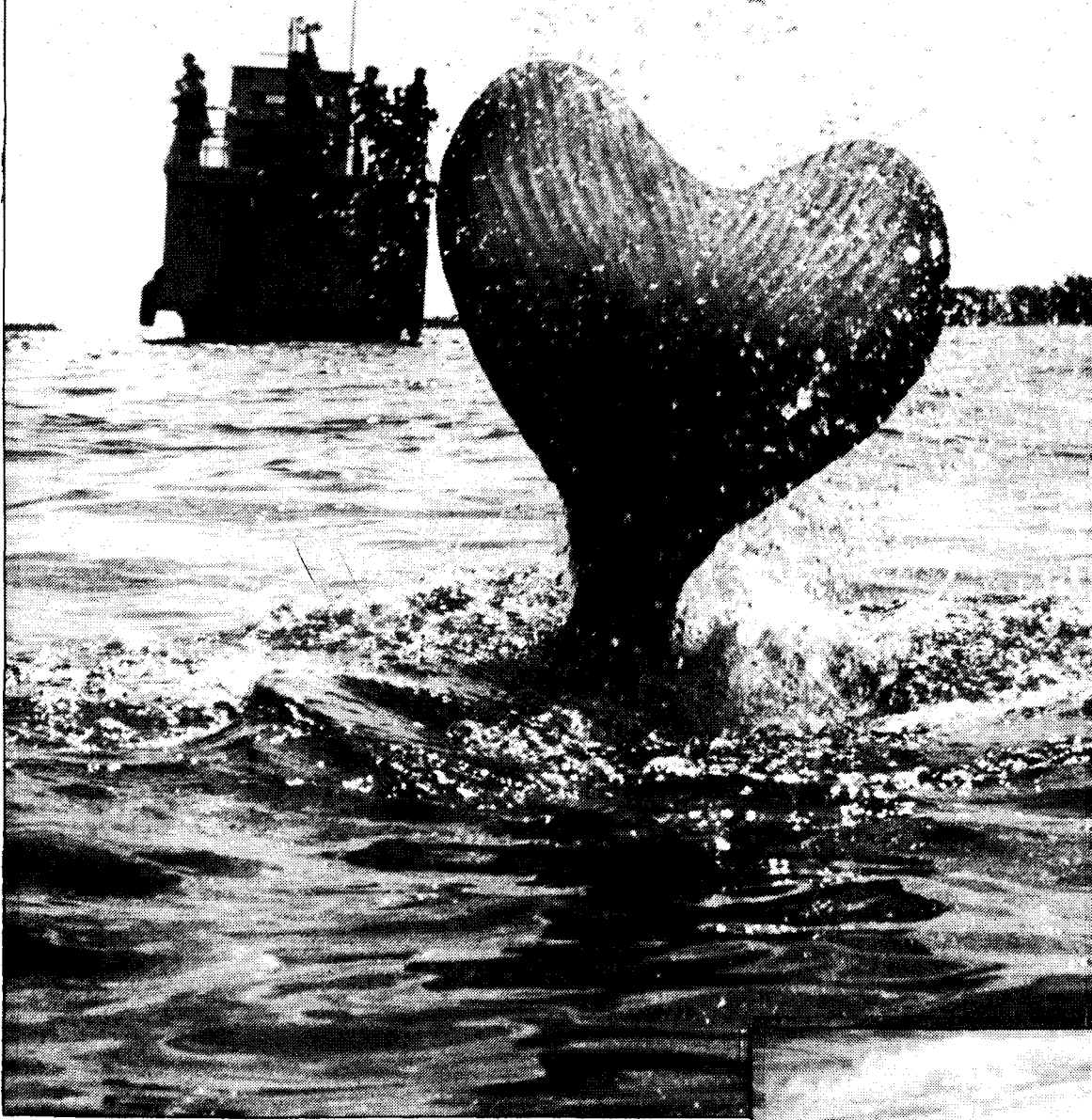
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of Liberty stark naked, and free of other irritating accessories of social life as well. She is, for instance, silent, unable to communicate except through fish-screeches; and she is also uninhibitedly sexy, vamping the vegetable wholesaler in front of the police sergeant who has filed her among the missing persons.

This mermaid is no Siren, though. She doesn't wield her natural power in order to drag her lover down, at least not on purpose. She just comes to town to visit, and of course she picks up a few survival skills while she's there. But becoming civilized—let's not forget that the word comes from the Latin for "city"—doesn't taint her natural purity.

Why? Because she only masters the aspects of social life that make her an excellent consumer—the modern version of the "silent woman," the passive receiver of civilization's delights. She gets her complete education at Bloomingdale's and talks only the language of TV commercials. She participates in the economy solely through the magic of plastic, with her boyfriend's seemingly limitless credit card.

Not everyone has his infatuated response to the mermaid. Most people want to bring her down to their level, reduce her to an object of scientific study, career advancement or promotional copy. The more this innocent boy and this magical girl go down those mean streets, the better the sea looks. When they both *Daryl Hannah reveals various protuberances in SPLASH!*

This is the world run by men, and there is something at least as monstrous about it as about a fish-woman.

Underneath the flashy topical references, ancient myths are as alive as ever. Men and women are two different, basically incompatible species. "You can't live with 'em, and you can't live without 'em," says the slang phrase. Only true love—the kind that "takes you away from all this," not the one that could weather doing the dishes—can bridge a gender gap this big. *Splash!* plays on these ancient notions with zest and whimsy.

And in doing so, *Splash!* may mark the inception of a post-feminist era, signalling, in its own small and charming way, the rise of a generation that regards the gains of feminists as fact and their issues as passe. Those Bloomingdale's fashions dress up one of the oldest concepts in the world: that women are only half-human. And that concept has consequences for both men and women—even more so, in fact, for the boy and girl at a "date movie," who probably think a romantic comedy like *Pat and Mike* is about old people long ago.

In the wake of *Splash!*, it seems like a long time since 1976, when feminist writing was an exciting new intellectual field, and when Dorothy Dinnerstein published *The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise*. In it, she argued that our rigid sexual roles and attitudes bred dangerous social practices. Furthermore, our male-dominated society stood a good chance of killing off the entire species in our time. And yet it was clear that men and women cooperated in an unjust and unequal separation of sexual powers.

To find out why, she turned to psychology and to the ancient symbols around sexuality in our culture. And she begged readers to pursue a different, more flexible kind of relationship between the sexes. Looking upon women as only half-human, she pointed out, was not only dangerous—it turned men into monsters as well.

Dinnerstein's explorations went to the depths of modern psychology. But it's movies like *Splash!* that bring the same semi-conscious beliefs she studies back up to the cultural surface. This elegantly funny film issues a siren call to the 12-to-24-year-olds, reaffirming the old ideas that women are really part-monsters and that a dialogue between the sexes is possible only through the magic of romance.

©Pat Aufderheide

FILMS

An old myth out of water

By Pat Aufderheide

In the spring, Hollywood's fancy turns to "date movies," boy-girl specials for that golden 12-to-24 audience as well as the rest of us who don't mind a break into bathos from the daily grind.

This season the romantic assault is particularly fierce, and it's spearheaded by *Splash!*, a triumphal number one in box office across the nation. The movie is so much fun, and so widely loved, that it deserves a second look—not just as a sporty vehicle for escape, but as a carrier of social values. After all, mass-market fantasy only really works if it's rooted in mass realities.

In *Splash!*, a hard-working, earnest vegetable wholesaler (Tom Hanks) looks in vain for true love. He finds it in the sea, where he meets a mermaid (Daryl Hannah). She falls for him and follows him to the streets of New York and corridors of Bloomingdale's, before enchanting him right back into the sea with her.

The film is a delightful confection. Hannah's winsome lip-biting, her slim figure and long blonde hair set a new unattainable goal for American women. The dialogue (by Bruce Jay Friedman) makes witty fun of the trials of everyday urban life, and Ron Howard's super-slick direction makes ironic commentary on the new consumerism. (Working in TV, as Howard did

for years, makes you efficient first and last—but Howard has heart as well.)

It isn't surprising that people are flocking to this film, because it executes its central concept with such charm. But the charm would be nothing without the central concept. In the center of that concept is the mermaid. It's an ancient image and a concise one that neatly summarizes the "natural" female force that matches—and sometimes conquers the "civilized" masculinity

of economics and politics. Ever since Ulysses plugged his ears to sail past the Sirens—the beings who lured men away from war and politics and plunged them into fishy forgetfulness—men have been trying to decide whether or not to put wax in their own ears.

This mermaid is a modernized model of that ancient symbol. Every adolescent boy's dream of the perfect playmate, she's a force of nature with an immense ability to nurture. She is delivered up at the feet of the Statue



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May 3

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May 5

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finally plunge in, all the film's investment in social irony pays off. We're glad to see them go. Heck, we wish we could go too.

In Greek mythology, mermaids were also destroyers. *Splash!*, though, touches up the ancient imagery. In this version, it's not the mermaid's fault that she lures the hero below the surface of society. She's a victim of true love, as is the boy. The real villain is the grungy world of commerce and cops, of skin magazines and cheap affairs.

Gilly, Suzanne Jonas, Arthur Kinoy, June Nash, Immanuel Wallerstein and George Wald. Registration: \$10.00 gen., \$5.00 students and unemployed. (212) 929-5105 for information.

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Drama

Continued from page 16

Ronald Reagan, going misty-eyed while describing his miserable bit of thuggery as an heroic rescue, is well within this dramatic tradition.

Risky material, then, for any company in 1601 or 1984. This makes the current production at the Oregon Shakespearean Festival all the more impressive. The choice of script wasn't courageous in and of itself—this company makes a point of performing all of Shakespeare's plays. But instead of mounting a modest studio production and running it for a few performances, the festival has pulled out all the stops, producing a horrific vision of universal war that will play until early September.

The Festival won a special Tony Award last year for its contributions to regional theater. Its repertory is more classical than that of most middle-brow regional companies. The theater survives in Ashland, Ore., by drawing people with money, taste and leisure from San Francisco

and Seattle. Like Shakespeare, the Festival is working ahead of its audience's expectations. As a result, this production concerns contemporary social predicaments more than private torments, unlike many "avant-garde" productions.

Troilus presented unusual problems for director Richard White. It certainly would not be difficult to update the play, since it is virtually impossible to watch these vainglorious Greeks and vengeful Trojans without thinking of Ronald Reagan's cabinet vs. the Politburo. The problem is how to avoid making *Troilus* so narrowly contemporary as to lose Shakespeare's weary sense of perpetually repeated barbarism.

White, set designer William Bloodgood and costume designer Michael Olich solve the problem by means of archeological eclecticism. Bloodgood's set, a crumbling ruin set atop a mound of debris—shattered monuments, castaway armor and human skulls—suggests the layers upon layers of destruction that have built up over eons of warfare, reminding us that the "Troy" of this play is one more layer among many in a refuse heap. Olich draws from many sources, notably samurai films and *The Road Warrior*, to por-

tray a universal military culture and the human fascination with death and its instruments. Todd Barton's shrieking sound score contributes to the effect.

White weaves these elements into a nihilistic whole. Far from avoiding the unpleasantness inherent in the play, he emphasizes it. Human beings and their motives appear downright ugly throughout. The show compels horrified fascination through sheer spectacle and through the repeated question, "What will these murderous idiots do next?"

The execution isn't always up to the conception. Some of the performances are fine, but White sometimes vitiates the atmosphere by allowing actors to work in traditional styles ill-suited to the production's punk pyrotechnics. Joe Vincent, a solid and competent conventional actor, gets away with playing Ulysses as a clean-cut, reasonable leader but he should be a treacherous manipulator and cutthroat.

One of the many anomalies in *Troilus and Cressida* is that the romance is just a subplot drawn from a medieval story. The tale of Troilus, an ardent young Trojan prince, and his lover Cressida (who is traded to the Greeks in a prisoner exchange and promptly throws over Troi-

IN THESE TIMES APRIL 25-MAY 1, 1984 15

lus for a cynical Greek warrior) makes the point that love, like everything else, turns foul in endless war.

Todd Cohen is suitable as Troilus, a callow but not detestable young gamecock who can hardly be blamed for growing up with childish notions of honor and vengeance. One critic complained that Cohen seemed more like a basketball player than a tragic hero. That's a good line, but it should have been a compliment, since it captures Troilus' mentality perfectly. (Young Rangers just back from Grenada probably also think that those medals handed out with such abandon make them hot stuff.) Susan Wands is a charming—too charming—Cressida. White should have insisted on a harder and nastier characterization.

This *Troilus and Cressida* is well worth a trip for travelers on Interstate 5 who can stop in Ashland. For those unlikely to make a cultural pilgrimage to rural Oregon, it is still good to remember that the avant-garde is where you find it. As long as we never seem to learn from our mistakes, some plays are always contemporary.

Phillip Johnson is a free-lance writer in Eugene, Ore.

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Ilium Lives and Dies Again

By Phillip Johnson

A STUPID, POINTLESS CONFLICT drags on for years, feeding upon itself and purging civilization until nothing remains but violence and lechery. Societies have become armed camps. One side is led by an affable, cliché-mongering commander-in-chief, a moodily narcissistic military hero and an amoral palace intriguer. The other side is locked into a fortress mentality, its populace reduced to misery while its wealth pours into defense.

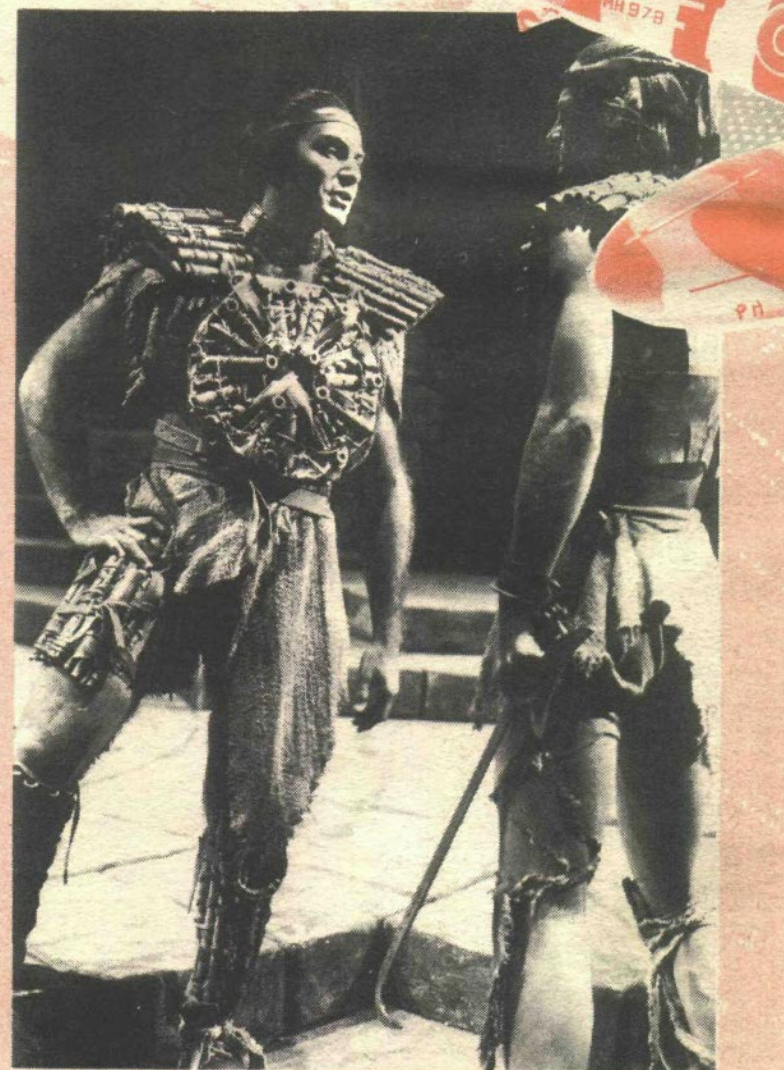
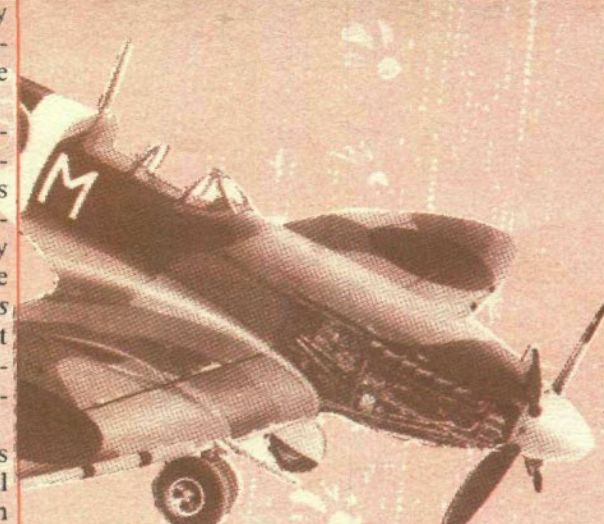
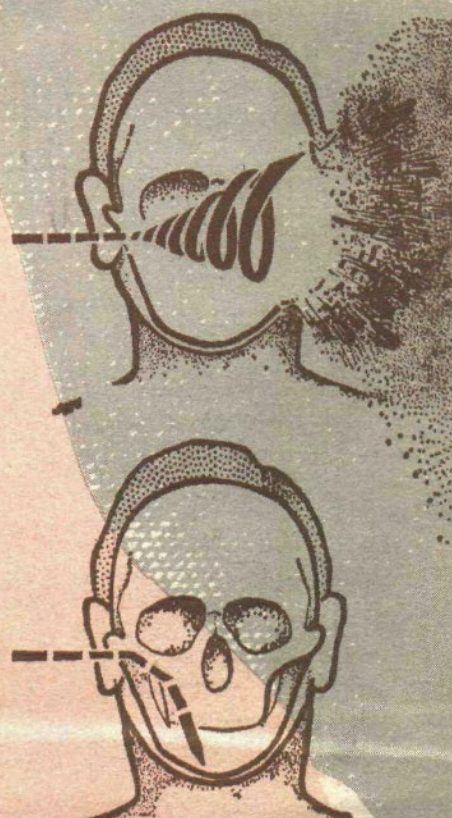
The subject is the Trojan War. Modern parallels are easy to see, so it wouldn't be surprising to find an avant-garde playwright twisting Homer's tale into a send-up of ideological madness and military posturing. Can such a play find an audience in an era when the public is gripped by a deadly fascination for force and belligerence?

The first time around, the answer was no. It is almost certain that *Troilus and Cressida* bombed. And the play's failure to find an Elizabethan audience is understandable. While an undercurrent of cynicism disturbs some of Shakespeare's work, *Troilus and Cressida* is cynical both on the surface and at the core. It is a satire—at times a very funny one—but it does not merely mock excesses and follies. It attacks the brutalizing nature of war itself, which it depicts as the ruling class' callous sport that reduces society to savagery. *Troilus and Cressida* directly assaulted the Elizabethan period's martial ideals: Homer's heroes were taken seriously, and Shakespeare took a chance by making horses' asses of them. A playwright who had stuck with traditional forms of comedy and tragedy suddenly took a leap into the avant-garde, challenging cherished assumptions in the most threatening manner imaginable.

Troilus still waits for its audience. Until late in the last century it was considered unplayable. In recent decades it has received an occasional production, usually in an antiquarian spirit, and the play languishes with such deservedly obscure works as *Timon of Athens* and *Titus Andronicus*. *Troilus*' problem is that it still threatens popular audiences, particularly in this country, where anti-war satires are not exactly the rage.

As our recent spree in Grenada and its public acceptance demonstrate, martial ardor is never far from the surface, even in fashionably cynical times. The traditional function of poets has been to memorialize such sordid episodes and transform them into morale-building mythology. Shakespeare violated the poet's covenant with political power by portraying Homer's characters realistically (although he only made the mistake once).

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Trojan War is replayed in Oregon